THE HOUSEHOLD OF THE LAFAYETTES

EDITH SICHEL


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THE HOUSEHOLD OF THE LAFAYETTES

By
EDITH SICHEL

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"CATHERINE DE MEDICI AND THE FRENCH REFORMATION"
"THE LATER YEARS OF CATHERINE DE MEDICI"
"WOMEN AND MEN OF THE FRENCH RENAISSANCE"
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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

MUCH has been said, much has been written about the Ancien Régime—that shadowy system from which we are separated by the Gulf of the French Revolution. History, fiction, poetry, philosophy have all busied themselves with it. It has acquired for us a conventional glamour, an almost legendary power, and we have done much to transfer it from solid historical ground to the domain of Magic—a picture-book country where everybody moves romantically and morals do not exist. To the unversed majority the Ancien Régime conveys an impression of enchanted vice and sensational starvation; cupids and serfs; deep curtseys, minuets, and high heels that crush human beings beneath them; wax candles and intrigues; ladies in patches and powder playing at *les Graces* with gentlemen in three-cornered hats and pink satin waistcoats—gentlemen who bought their clothes out of taxes wrung from the poor, and occasionally hunted their peasants instead of stags. Yet Human Nature, the one criterion we possess by which to judge unknown generations, was the same then as now, though it existed under different conditions; and Human Nature, when consulted, can hardly accept as probable the strange pageant that our fancy too readily adopts. The reason is not far to seek. "The evil that men do lives after them"; the lurid exceptions in human history are easiest

to remember; its unconspicuous normal side naturally slips out of sight.

The vice, so much dwelled on, was certainly no fiction. There was a corrupt Court Party, whose vagaries can hardly be overstated; but then there were almost as large a number of nobles—some Catholic, some philosophical—who led lives of saintly virtue and religious fervour—such virtue that it seems as if it should have saved the City. Still the mass belonged to the vast world of the *Entre-deux*, and spent average quiescent existences, good-naturedly enough, under a system which they never stopped to question. They did as others did, judging good and evil by the standards of the majority, and effected neither directly, much like their counterparts in our own day. We only seem less selfish because the public opinion that controls us has reached a higher plane, and to sink below the prescribed level often requires as much originality as to rise above it. Indeed, the aspirations, if not the actions, of the ordinary French noble of 1750 were usually strung at a far higher pitch than those of our contemporaries; as a matter of fashion, he was penetrated by his Rousseau and his Voltaire, and there was more nobility of sentiment, even amongst the commonplace of his class, than at any other period.

The mistake in the popular picture of the Ancien Régime is easy to discover, and still easier to make. It is a common blunder. The people portrayed are confounded with the system under which they lived. With this system, in all its details and its anomalies, every reader of De Tocqueville or Carlyle is familiar; nor do we propose here to deal with it. Our task is a more congenial one. It lies with the personalities who make the exceptions to the rule, and with a restricted number

amongst those personalities. We have already spoken of the two extremes of aristocratic Society—of the *Œil-de-Bœuf*, and of the company, so much less known, of holy-minded men and women irradiating the last years of the old order. Excepting by the readers of Memoirs, their names are seldom heard. Yet their actions still "smell sweet and blossom in the dust," if we will but stoop to pick them up. Their lives are recorded, often in detail—lives as exalted and as full of suffering as those of the canonized Martyrs, and better reading than theirs, because they combine Christian sacrifice with social grace, and austerity with sympathy; because their unction was of the heart, and sweetened not only their manners, but their inmost thoughts.

The most *winning* of them are certainly to be found amongst the orthodox religious; their personal piety has a distinction, an attraction, of its own. But they counted in their ranks philosophers, whose conduct was as pure and self-renouncing; men who were practically more effective, because more occupied with theories of enlightenment, and with public affairs. Of the former type, the De Noailles family are representative; Lafayette and his friends are a fine embodiment of the latter. In an endeavour to revive in some of its charm and purity the figure of Adrienne d'Ayen, who afterwards became Madame de Lafayette, we shall have the best opportunity of seeing the two sides united.

But stars can only be measured by their relation to lesser lights; a study of the average mind is almost necessary to our full comprehension of heroic souls. And it is only by understanding the social conditions of any period that we can do justice to the characters that lived under them, especially those of larger mould, who tried

to master or to ennoble them. Biography, without this knowledge, has no more truth or vitality than a sermon on a text apart from its context. It will therefore, we hope, be pardoned us, if before assuming the directer functions of biography, we pause to look round and to take a bird's-eye view, however rapidly, of the aristocratic world as it then existed.

That brilliant world was contained within the gates of Paris. There all the nobles congregated: Paris made their aims; Paris made their pleasures. The roads from the city to the provinces were mere cart-ruts that looked as if a *gentilhomme's* coach could never roll along them Unless it were to amuse a Parisian party by a boar-hunt and to fill their halls with the tinkle of Parisian witticisms, these grandees never approached their lands of their own free will. The iron persuasion of a *lettre de cachet* could alone induce them to remain there, and the two estates that were exceptions in prosperity were those of the exiled Ducs de Choiseul and d'Aiguillon. It is only when we realize how stationary gentlemen then were, that we understand how they found time for incessant society, copious letter-writing and absorbing friendships. They did not so much as stir out of Paris with their families in the summer, till late in the eighteenth century; and even then the annual visit to the country gave them no pleasure. Like all French arrangements of that day, it became an intellectual institution, due to the prevailing Anglomanie, and still more to the influence of Rousseau. Nature meant to them no joy of hill and woodland, but a Theory of Education and a Social Millennium. Small wonder, then, that Arthur Young, travelling southwards in the France of 1787 covered 270 miles without meeting a single gentleman. "Heaven grant me patience," cries that sturdy farmer,

"while I see a country thus neglected, and forgive me the oaths I swear at the absence and ignorance of the possessors!"

Yet those possessors were usually kindly men, although they left reckless substitutes in their Intendants. There is a story told of the Prince de Conti, who had a great reputation for cruelty. He was going to Mass with some ladies, when his bailiff came and informed him that a poacher had just been taken in the grounds of the château. He asked what he should do with him. "Give him a hundred stripes and imprison him in a dungeon for two years," was the prompt reply in unanswerable tones. One of the ladies, overflowing with sensibility, almost fainted, for she knew the poacher had a large family. She went to the bailiff to see what could be done. He laughed in her face. "The Prince only said that to keep up his reputation," he exclaimed. "His Royal Highness came to me directly after Mass, and begged me to see that the poor wretch was only sent away from the neighbourhood for two months, and that his family was well looked after during his absence." The Prince was no exception. Many of the high-souled *jeunesse dorée*, who talked and walked, doubted and dreamed in the broad *Places* of their Paris, would have resented the wrongs done to the peasants, could they have grasped those wrongs as abstract ideas. It is but fair to them to remember that, apart from court duties, they were attracted to the city as much by intellect as by pleasure. There ideas vibrated; there mind found mind, and struck electric sparks; there gathered, so it seemed to them, the men who could help mankind.

Indeed, never before had there been such a Cult of Liberty. The youth of France dreamed they had drunk of a golden cup, and they were intoxicated. They wept,

they perorated, they crowned each other with bay-leaves, they embraced—they believed. Any cause that presented itself in the name of Freedom was welcomed by them with acclamation, and without enquiry, whether it was emancipation from slavery or from the marriage laws, restitution of civil rights to the Protestants, or destruction of the altars of the Church.

When America declared its independence, young Paris took fire, braved disinheritance, and offered its aid without interest or reserve. Voltaire blessed Benjamin Franklin's son; it was one of his last actions, and the young men hailed it as a fitting consummation of his life. There was "a rage for simplicity"—a feeling too complex for its object. When Silas Deane and Arthur Lee, the American envoys, came over to Paris, with unpowdered hair and plain dark cloth coats, moving, we are told, like dignified farmers amidst this scintillating world, the young men of Versailles wanted to give up *toupets* and to adopt fustian. They would willingly have worn rags and eaten dry bread if they could have helped negroes, Huguenots, or abstract victims by such sacrifice. The only things they never thought of giving up were their privileges, their taxes and their game laws; the only people they never dreamed of delivering, the haggard race at their gates.

The intellectual part of their enthusiasm was the most successful. Events fostered it. Montesquieu had unearthed many popular rights; his *Esprit des Lois* became an object of earnest study. The *Parlements* of Paris were restored after a lapse of years by the callous old Maurepas, desirous of ease with all parties, and ignorant of the ball he had set rolling. Constitutional ideas became the fashion and England the rage; English habits, English books, English drama, English dress were *de haut ton*. The rain-

bow satins and frilled *gilets*, which had stood out in strong contrast to the black coats of the working classes, disappeared before the levelling British *frac*, worn by all conditions of men. It even replaced the menial liveries, to the fury of the old peers at Versailles, who considered this as the high-water mark of degeneration. English simplicity was not enough for the younger spirits; in their zeal for our moderation, they also adopted our luxuries. Racing almost ousted gambling; English lords came over with their horses, and taught French marquises how to breed them. The horses were soon followed by their attendant *Jokeis*—a wizened race of children stunted with drugs and wrapped in blankets to keep them of a proper size for their profession. The enthusiasm for the Turf was only rivalled by that for Freedom. Louis XVI. alone disapproved and refused to bet more than an *écu* upon a winning horse; but his protest fell unheeded on the radiant luxury around him. Life had a fantastic charm for those who could pass so lightly from dream to reality; from the "*vague du salon*" to the "*réel du cabinet*," at a time when between class and class "there was great familiarity and no equality," as the young Comte de Ségur wrote in after years. "Liberty, royalty, aristocracy, democracy, prejudice, reason, novelty, philosophy!" he exclaims, "never was awakening preceded by a sweeter sleep or more alluring dreams. . . . In our châteaux, with peasants, guards, and bailiffs, we still found some vestige of our ancient feudal power; at court and in town we enjoyed the distinctions of birth, . . . and yet, henceforth we could mix without pomp or trammel with our fellow-citizens, and enjoy all the gentleness of equality with our peasants."

Zeal for Humanity brought zeal for Science in its train. Science and all its semblances—astrology, chemistry,

magnetism, and medicine—existed only to alleviate the sufferings of men. The same high-souled jumble continued. When the first balloon was sent up from the Tuileries Gardens, with Chemist Charles and Robert inside it, the applauding crowd was moved to tears; relief of all distress was now to be instantaneous; the arts of warfare were to be changed, towns besieged, and England invaded by balloon; and sanguine ladies dreamed more selfishly, but not more irrationally, of Corsairs descending and romantic aërial courtships. The aëronauts were hailed as gods; with the increase of material prosperity, men grew indeed to consider themselves as gods, secure and almost immortal. On the one hand, we find serious students and discoverers making solid progress in knowledge: Lavoisier in his laboratory, Laplace and Lagrange in their observatories, Cuvier and Buffon in the Jardin des Plantes; on the other hand, appraised at the same value as themselves, stands a crowd of scientific virtuosi; sincere charlatans and insincere charlatans, each with his panacea for the world's ills encased in big theory or small phial; each believed in with the whole faith of the impressionable Parisian nature. And over all, glorifying dupes and even deceivers, burned this newly-kindled flame of philanthropy, the feeling for pain, the determination to abolish it. Most of the men who made empiric experiments in this cause, believed in them truly; they were guilty of credulity rather than of dishonesty—of confused and undisciplined minds rather than of lawlessness.

A certain aristocrat named Lauragrais, who brought over the first *Jokei*, was typical of the majority. Enormously rich, he had run through all the sensations of Paris, with enough nobility of nature to make a cynic of himself instead of a rake. He savagely forbade his mistress any food but

sweetmeats for a fortnight, and only replied to her complaints by saying, "How can you grumble? you who are living upon the superfluities of life, which so many people pray for in vain!" Satiety made a convert of him; zeal for his kind overtook him; he fasted, went about in rags, unkempt; and finally spent the greater part of his fortune in lighting furnaces and inventing processes for the grinding of diamonds in the interests of Humanity—diamonds which had first to be purchased. And in this rather vague hope for the help of mortal misery, he confidently expired—a symbol of the future.

More conspicuous as an example of power and incongruity was Mesmer. He had, it is true, better cause to gain credence, both from himself and others. Possessed of a mysterious influence which must have seemed, even to his own mind, half magic, half scientific, it would have been strange if he had not felt sincere faith in his gift and looked upon the display of it as a mission. It lent itself, no doubt, to theatrical effects, half unconscious tricks, and conscious puerilities; but his talent for hypnotism was genuine, and enabled him to assuage pain; and if he was a conjuror, he believed himself to be also a priest. He was not merely a genius-quack, like Cagliostro, and it is not surprising therefore that his séances should have possessed Paris. They were thronged, not only by every grandee—by fainting princesses, eager beauties, and credulous bluestockings — but by earnest students, weighty savants, and grave patriots with ideals, Lafayette amongst them. They came as to an oracle, night after night, to watch and listen, in the hope that here at last was the solution of their most crucial problems. Yet the result was less than futile. There is no more notable instance of the current disparity between deed and aspiration than

that of the young nobleman, a disciple of Mesmer, who was driving in his coach from Paris to a ball at Versailles. On his road he met some peasants bearing a litter, on which a man's form lay stretched. In an instant, he leaped from the carriage and stopped the litter. The rain was pouring; he was clad in laces and satins, but nothing daunted, and without asking a question, he proceeded to try and alleviate Human Suffering. For an hour he stood there, the storm beating on his powdered head, without producing the slightest effect. Amazed at this, he at last inquired the nature of the patient's illness. "*Ah, monsieur,*" replied one of the peasants, "*vous pensiez donc que c'était un malade? C'est un cadavre!*" Tears seem as fitting here as laughter. To attempt to revive a corpse by mesmerism, under the impression that it is a living creature—could Carlyle himself have found a more pathetic sham than this?

The half-century preceding a radical Revolution may often be recognised by the number of Reforms, small and great, proposed during that period: still more by the universal talk about them. The Paris of 1770 and 1780 resounded with changes—in Law, Trade, Art, Society. It was a symptom of the times that every question engendered parties and feuds, so that the whole town was split up into hostile camps, which met festively in every drawing-room and club to fight with their tongues and pursue with their pens. The science of Harmony provided perhaps the fiercest dispute of all, and the famous Gluck and Piccini quarrel will be the longest remembered. Then there was the war of the Economists about Free Trade in grain, and, almost as prominent, the discussion on Military Tactics. For some time nothing else was spoken of amongst the fine ladies in their *salons*, or the coachmen in the streets, but the question as to whether

corporal punishment with the flat of the sabre, which prevailed in the German army, should also be used in the French. Voices became shrill over it. In those Memoirs which revive his century before our eyes, the Comte de Ségur tells us that one fine morning an aristocratic officer, a comrade of his, rushed into his room in evident agitation. "Swear to do me a service!" he cried, his hand upon his heart. The Count swore. "Take my sabre and strike me hard on the back with the flat of it, till I bid you stop," said the other. The sensible Count tried persuasion and anger in vain. Forced to keep his oath, he hit out with some malice, but it was not till an hour had passed that the order to cease came. The kneeling officer rose to his feet; tears of sensibility were in his eyes. "Now," he exclaimed, "I know from experience that this chastisement is not only possible, but perfectly humane." The Count believed all was over, but, to his dismay, his friend declared that, to make the test complete, he also must undergo it. Resistance was as vain as before. De Ségur submitted, but cried "Halt" at the first stroke. The two men then parted with many embraces, the officer unmoved in his hardly-won theory.

Everywhere we see the same symptoms: asceticism without a religion to produce it; spiritualism without belief in Spirit; faith without a God.

It may be urged that amongst the women, at any rate, there was no puzzling mixture; that here the frivolity was uncomplicated by aspiration. Their luxury was indeed incredible; they accepted it like the air they breathed, yet it could not quite smother the dreams of the soul. Their monastic education helped this; though mundane, it was by no means materialistic, and the need of religion was always kept carefully before them. It

was only occasionally that they had a *gouvernante* at home—a woman of good birth and principles *ad libitum*. In this case they saw their parents formally, perhaps once a day, and lived in rooms apart. Usually they were sent at five or six years old to a convent ruled by a courtly Abbess, whence they did not come out till they were fourteen or fifteen, when a suitor was ready for their hands. By strict etiquette, he presented himself immediately after their first Communion, and they were prepared with equal conscientiousness for both events. It was the Abbess who performed these duties, who gave the convents their tone in things celestial as well as things secular, and cleverly united the two elements in her own person.

They were a powerful race, these Abbesses, often worldly, always aristocratic, respecting religion as the basis of all things, but including in these their own coaches, their dinings out, their visits from gentlemen by day, and their afternoon receptions in their private parlours. "Their position," writes a lady of the eighteenth century, "gives the stability of a married woman . . . the independence of a widow, without the ties which a family imposes. For these advantages there is only the trouble of wearing a cross, which is becoming; black or grey habits, which can be made as magnificent as one likes; a little imperceptible veil, and a knitting-sheath."

On the whole, these Mother Superiors were better than the demands made on them; they were generally conscientious, and often noble-minded. But the strange mixture of piety and worldliness which they represented ran through their whole system.

It has become almost impossible to disentangle the two qualities. The convents were the only repositories of faith

in a sceptical age; they kept up all its forms and many of its daily practices with vigilance. They were quite as much the only schools for breeding; nowhere else could such high-born teachers as the Abbesses be found. The Roman Church fosters good tone; it is a church of far-reaching traditions and sanctified diplomacy. Unction is, after all, but the grace of religion—a kind of spiritual good manners which reconcile God and Cæsar.

This combination naturally pervaded the education of the convent pupils. They learned many accomplishments: Latin and the harpsichord, to make jams, medicines, and perfumes; to embroider, to sing, and to form their style upon Bossuet. But they were taught two things above all others—deportment and kindness, both based as much upon good manners as upon piety.

Kindness is, indeed, one of the prominent features of the women in those days: kindness to each other, kindness to those below them. Suavity was expected of them both in word and action. Good deeds to the poor were made part of their daily discipline, and practised as a matter of course. They fed Lazarus at their gates, and healed his sores with ointments from their own pharmacies. Here we read of a paralyzed beggar, brought weekly in her pristine condition to be washed, *coiffée*, and fed by an aristocratic *pensionnaire*; mademoiselle's chief punishment was to be considered unworthy of this office. There, again, we see a fashionable Abbess in long robes of becoming grey, discarding her coach, and trudging across the fields, with a pupil by her side, to bear soup and comfort to the sick of the parish. These recluses were, in truth, as innocent as they were worldly. They made intense friendships with each other, and managed to combine humility with grace, and routine with gaiety.

No doubt their goodness was often ornate, but any goodness is better than none at all.

As for their deportment, it included every degree of mental and physical control, from the fine shades of conduct under emotion, to the most primitive rules for behaviour. These they imbibed from a Primer of Etiquette then in vogue: "*Civilités puériles et honnêtes*,"—which exhorted the youth of the time to many social duties, such as to prefer knives to fingers, to use pocket-handkerchiefs, and, if possible, not to comb their hair in church. Models of decorum were not wanting; they had before their eyes not only their Superiors, but also the great ladies who came to lodge in their midst and often adopted them as protégées. The convents of that age occupied a strange position; they filled the place of hotels and lodgings at a time when the only existing inns were impossible for women and the genteel landlady as yet was not. Widows and spinsters of blue blood and slender incomes took apartments in them; amongst others, Madame du Deffand, whose habits were not monastic. Ladies whose husbands were away on embassies, or other State business, were kept safe there during their absence as was the brilliant Madame de Genlis, who loved convents and worldly-holiness almost as much as she loved herself. These grand folk had their own apartments, suites of retainers, evening parties and theatricals; and mixed as much or as little as they pleased with the rest of the household. But they were its great excitement; the Vanity Fair of its pupils and of the good smooth-cheeked nuns, who were simpler and more pious than their Lady Superiors. Madame de Genlis used even to give Carnival balls to the children and these Sisters—balls to which only one man was admitted, and he the one-eyed Convent-

Steward, aged seventy, who declared that "the *Chassée* slew him." They loved dancing with each other, honest souls, and making tarts and cider for refreshment. It was, anyhow, at such entertainments as these that young ladies learned to bear themselves, to converse and matriculate in *bon ton*, before their entrance into the great world.

When they did emerge, it was into a vortex of gaiety. At first sight, there is nothing to be seen but enchanting frivolity and graceful extravagance. When a certain *grande dame* once expressed the slightly remote wish for a painting of her canary small enough to be put into a ring, the Prince de Conti, who was present, immediately offered her one. She demurred; he insisted. A compromise was at last effected by his assurance that the painting should have no setting. He kept his word, but had the canary covered with a diamond, cut so finely that it acted as the glass over a miniature. Incensed at what she considered a breach of his word, she returned the gift. He took it; ground the diamond to powder and used the dust for drying the note he wrote her on the occasion. No fairy-tale gallant could be more fantastic, or more ignorant of pounds, shillings and pence.

As for the fêtes, they were endless and held in every form. There were acted maxims and proverb-quadrilles, in which the partners represented sayings in appropriate costumes; there were moonlight operas and Watteau-picnics in groves that sprang up for the occasion; shepherdesses, in blue and pink satin, were perpetually arriving in rose-laden boats at their relatives' houses, to sing bad verses and receive diamond earrings in return; or they fished for bouquets with silken nets and declaimed, in blank verse, their amazement at their success. Once a

party of beauties was informed by their host that they were to be made Vestal Virgins that night. He led them to a temple, built in one day in his forest. Whilst they were undergoing the most frolic rites there, a letter was brought warning them that the Grand Turk and his suite meant to descend on them and carry them off. The moment after, these Ottoman pirates appeared, blacked, disguised and bejewelled. Every magnificent turban concealed a lover; there was a Rape in Fancy Dress; the Chief Lover, clad as the Sultan, bore away the Chief Lady and deposited her before a gorgeous midnight banquet, where each Turk finally put down his Fair. The evening ended in mad revelry—the only point of the joke lying in the fact that the ladies had recently beheld the sea for the first time and the pirates were supposed to have spied them from mid-ocean.

There were failure-festivals, even then. One was given by a pathetic lady, who has come down to posterity as "pretty without seeming so, and clever with the knack of appearing silly." She had planned a ball, in a room made of mirrors, leading into a real wood. At a given moment of the dance, a flock of live sheep was to cross the landscape led by an opera-singer, who was to be dressed as a shepherdess and to regale the guests with melody. But the opera-singer, like her kind, was unpunctual—and the pent-up sheep growing restive, did not await the summons; they suddenly rushed in amongst the dancers, scattering or upsetting them, and smashing the mirrors to atoms. The hostess' pride was broken quite as effectively as her glass; her friends were in dudgeon, and the ball came to a premature end.

Leisure seemed endless then, and the châteaux were so vast that each guest had her suite of rooms, where

she received her friends and could dine apart if she chose. The belles did not despise each other's society. At one moment ladies' dinner-parties were fashionable and were given by five intimate Ariadnes, whose husbands had to leave them for the *Couchée* at Versailles, before the Royal Hunt. Another hostess was famed for her intellectual games. Her favourite *jeu d'esprit* was an imitation of a wits' supper at which one of the *habitués* acted Voltaire, she his divine Emily, and all the talk had to be in character. If the imitation was successful, her company must have been very exclusive, and headache the result of an evening with her.

One is glad to find them refreshing themselves with lighter recreations; chamber concerts, at which Gluck, Rameau, Cramer performed or listened; or readings, given by poets and writers, of their works. These were crowded by all members of society, grave or gay, young or old, rakish or retired. There were actually regulation interjections, regulation tears, occasionally regulation swoons performed by all women of sensibility, and the author was hurt if these did not take place. When they met a Voltaire, nothing short of a trance in his arms sufficed them. He went to visit an invalid lady; a crowd gathered round her bed to hear him speak. He recommended her the yolk of an egg and potato-meal. "*Quel homme! quel homme!*" cried an attentive chevalier already in tears, "*Pas un mot sans un trait!*"

Such tricks were only the defects of a quality. The hero-worship of that day is as self-forgetful as it is pathetic. When heavenly superstitions were abolished, people took to earthly ones and made gods to worship, not only of the Voltaires, the Rousseaus, the Franklins, but of the host of poetkins and painterkins whom a

burst of science and material prosperity is bound to bring forth.

Less generous swoons were also in vogue. The lovely, ill-starred Princesse de Lamballe was envied by all for her susceptibility; not only did she faint at the sight of living shell-fish, but even at the picture of a lobster. It took her two hours to come to. The Dowager Duchess of Orleans never swooned excepting before gentlemen. Convulsions were also very fashionable; it became a matter of course for every great lady to enjoy the mystery of a padded chamber, where she could writhe at ease, before a select audience of sympathetic gallants.

They had distractions of a less ephemeral nature. Not unfrequently we find the same brilliant galaxy illuminating lectures on chemistry or astronomy. Some even devoted their lives to science. There was a Mademoiselle de Roissy, only seventeen years old, who gave her days to anatomy, and never travelled without a skeleton packed into the hood of her carriage. Another lady was famed amongst the Faculty for her waxen studies of the human form, and lived alone, surrounded by them. Madame de Genlis rose at five every morning to study botany, geology, and mechanics, and always worked about eight hours a day. As for agriculture, Arthur Young tells us that he never had such a practical lesson in farming as from the lips of the aristocratic young Madame de Lunéville, who farmed her lands and understood her crops, to the great profit of her purse. To Literature they nearly all of them inclined, as to their natural ele ment; their letters are as masterly as their talk; only one more instance of the gracious French facility for measured expression which distinguishes Paris from London, and makes a frivolous Frenchwoman more impor-

tant and less offensive a being than a frivolous Englishwoman.

Another quality which marks even the giddiest of these women is their power and their knowledge of feeling. Many of them dignified their days by a lifelong passion; all of them were capable of sympathy, emotional or intellectual, though they did not always use their gifts. Even the *vanity* of affection—the need of pleasing—spurred them on to share the mental life of those they cared for. As the men became more absorbed in social and scientific questions, we hear that the works of Crébillon and other light-hearted authors vanished from the drawing-room tables and gave way to Montesquieu, or to the Abbé Raynal's book on the Emancipation of Slaves —a treatise as epoch-making as Beaumarchais' "Figaro." Their frivolities as well as their gravities meant a great deal of intelligent companionship.

To recognise this, we have only to look at their ordinary day. Rising at nine, they had an hour or two of reposeful *négligé*, and then, even in the earliest stages of their leisurely toilette, gentlemen were admitted to visit them. The stalwart American Ambassador, Gouverneur Morris, accustomed to the Puritan habits of such "overgrown villages as Philadelphia and Boston," was at first rather shocked at the ease with which his friends would say to him, "*Monsieur me permettra de continuer ma toilette?*" and would then suit their actions to their words. One lady even received her guests in her bath, which she modestly thickened with milk. After the dressing of their hair, the social flow hardly ceased. They dined at two, the villagers standing at the window, and watching them as if they were a play; then they talked and received again till supper. Most of them went to

church once a day. Some were devout in observance; the younger folk became weary on occasions and played tricks—such as putting lighted candles in the pocket of the officiating Bishop. The evening was again given up to talk and festivity. Sometimes it was spent at the Opera, which was then at the Palais Royal, and ended at half-past eight. When it was over, they stepped out into the gardens and gossiped and sang and declaimed to each other till past midnight, when they retired to the stately beds in their stately alcoves—the only places where they were silent.

Yet the early influence of the convent was not forgotten. The kindness with which they had been inculcated was still there, and their social graciousness was heightened by their habit of the world. They talked more gently of each other than we do now. With their servants, especially, they were on a familiar footing. Their ladies' maids and grooms came to them for help in every emergency; they even acted with them in private theatricals. This indulgence was sometimes carried to the point of folly. Madame de Genlis' Abigail, who was especially plain and middle-aged, was permitted to fulfil her desire of playing a romantic Phyllis; and when the infatuated maid entreated that she might always wear her pastoral costume and carry her crook, her mistress consented and allowed her attendance in this strange livery. There was another occasion when a village-girl, a tenant of the de Genlis, came to the same patroness with a tale of trouble. Her lover, the game-keeper, refused to marry her; she was expecting a child. Madame de Genlis was deeply moved at what she considered a tale of martyrdom; her husband summoned the game-keeper, abused him, promised the girl an enormous *dot*, and thus induced the now too willing suitor to accept

his bride. Sister-in-law Genlis presented her with nuptial lace; brother-in-law Genlis with three pairs of fine sheets; Madame herself with a trousseau, and the whole De Genlis family danced at the wedding.

Sometimes these bewildered little ladies carried their efforts into public life. A peeress of the time instituted *Bureaus of Virtue* and a Society of Perseverance—a kind of Charity Organization Society in fancy dress. Its members were told off in pairs, a lady and her cavalier, to investigate a certain number of cases and administer charity to them. A monthly prize was given for the noblest philanthropic deed; badges, ribbons and embraces abounded. Love for their kind was perhaps not the only feeling developed; yet in spite of this farrago, a good deal of work was done. In maturer years, indeed, as under cloistral discipline, personal ministering to the poor and intercourse with them were then more naturally accepted by average people, than in these times of Institutions and Associations.

Even good society breaks up into sets. In the Paris of that day there was a restricted circle which was omnipotent. Within its magic ring it claimed to include all those who deserved to be considered as *bonne compagnie.* It was a Judicial Power and the Final Court of Appeal in matters of feeling and taste, as well as in those of propriety; and it banished dishonourable people as rigorously as the ill-bred. Here too there was a division. The elder folk were austere in speech and manners, and conservative in tradition; the younger admitted innovation, sharp speeches and epigrams, but, like their elders, scorned any baseness in word or deed. The ruler of this *côterie* and the tyrant of good tone was the famous Maréchale de Luxembourg, who, in spite of a naughty youth, became in her old age a martinet about behaviour. To have offended her was to

be tabooed by all the people worth knowing, and the use of a word that was out of taste was enough to effect this. She hated bad feeling; she loved conventions. Once she overheard somebody remark that God was no respecter of persons and would take no note of good or bad tone. "You are much mistaken, Madame!" was all she replied, more in sorrow than in anger. Her Viceroy of manners was the sedate, large-tempered Madame de Beauvau, mother of the Princesse de Poix, the friend of the De Noailles family; and in this close circle we also find their other intimate, the Princesse d'Hénin, Lafayette's constant correspondent, who kept her good talk for tête-à-tête.

There are gentlemen without number: Monsieur de Coigny, who only pronounces one choice *mot* in a whisper, every time he goes out; M. de Jaucourt, who is called "The Moonbeam"; a certain amorous duke of fifty, who looks ninety, and is nicknamed "L'invalide de Cythère"; many more, whose titles could only bewilder, unaccompanied by biographies — whose biographies would fill volumes.

Into this high society, which they did not always frequent, were born the exceptional people with whose names we opened these pages—the people who triumphed over the spiritual chaos of their day and tried to face the truth. The Princesse d'Hénin may be said to have belonged to the philosophical, the Princesse de Poix to the more saintly amongst them. In many there was a mixture of both elements, though the philosophical generally prevailed. To such as these belonged "the pure, liberty-loving Duc de la Rochefoucauld," who, together with the Prince de Beauvau and the Duc de Nivernais, gave a new and nobler tone to conversation. There were his companions the De Grammonts, the Durforts, the Doudeauvilles, the public-spirited

De Choiseuls, the De Breteuils, and the fine old De Brog lies; here, too, were the fiery-blooded young apostles of liberty, the Comte de Ségur, the two Dillons, the eloquent Clermont, afterwards a "*Représentatif*", and the untiring Lafayette—all men of clear lights and set purpose, who worked, without confusion, for the good of their fellows. Turgot walks in and out amongst them, calm, luminous, ardent, yet cold; by his side stands the more fallible, more fanatical, more lovable Condorcet, or the stately De Malesherbes. Women there are also: the beautiful Madame d'Enville, the keen-minded Madame de Reynière, and her inseparable friend Madame de Tessé, of whom more hereafter.

It is easy enough to find these out and to retrace their stories; many of them belong to history and embodied their principles in measures or in actions. But we have said that the flower of the nobility was amongst the religious people. It is a harder task to revive *their* lives; they are hidden beneath bushels—dusty papers and piled-up years; they are fewer and farther apart. Yet some we can recall, refreshing even to mention, impossible though it is to pursue their histories here.

There was old Mademoiselle de Montesson, aristocratic and rich, who gave up her horse and carriage, went into apartments in Paris, reduced her expenses to £600 a year, and trudged about on foot, with the occasional treat of a sedan chair, in order that she might minister to the poor, and more especially visit the prisons. Till her time, they had been utterly neglected, and she renounced the more comfortable convent life because it would have prevented her from pursuing this work. Her pendant in sweet sanctity, though of a different kind, was Madame de Custines (wife of the General and mother-in-law of Chateaubriand's

love) who renounced the world without leaving it. She attended no gaieties; but she made a point of dressing her friends for their balls with her own hands and preferred accompanying her husband to the opera, to vexing him by refusal. Her short day was spent in loving, in sacrifice, in faith: a faith that calmed the pains of rapid consumption and made her death at twenty-four as radiant as her life had been.

Here also were the Du Châtelets, an unselfish couple living to do good and bring happiness, who perished during the Revolution; and their fellow-victim, Amélie de Lauzun, tender and wistful, who lived in the world and knew she was not of it—the Una of the Court, with no Red Cross Knight to protect her.

The names of pious men are naturally rarer. But if we seek such, we shall find them in the few families who devoted their better energies to their lands and lived upon them for the greater part of the year. Of this minority the De Liancourts and the De Noailles were the finest examples. They spent the winter at their Hôtels in Paris —the rest of their time on their estates. Intimately connected by friendship, their creeds, their aims, their attitude towards life were the same. Their days were filled by zeal for the public good, rather than by political activity, unless they considered it would promote their ends. The welfare of their own peasants they considered their first object, and acted as their fellow-workers and their First Lords of the Treasury. And all their deeds were softened by a serene tenderness; were warmed by the clear flame of an almost primitive Christianity. The philosophical Humanitarians may have done the same things, but their manner of doing them was different; their light, if pure, was dry, and their actions often became

functions. They could not have been more methodical than these saintly Nobles, and it is refreshing to find how closely the latter bound practical habits to pious impulse, and refined the whole by a grace and beauty born of good breeding.

"Nearer to the Château," writes Arthur Young, the guest of the De Liancourts, with his sober, trustworthy pen, "the Duchess of Liancourt has built a menagerie and dairy in a pleasing taste. . . . At a village near Liancourt, the Duke has established a manufacture of linen and stuffs mixed with cotton . . . There are twenty-five looms. . . . As the spinning for these looms is also established, it gives employment to great numbers of hands who were idle, for they have no sort of manufacture in the country. Such efforts merit great praise." There was also the Duke's Home for Training Orphan Boys for the Army; and his Industrial Home for the Daughters of the Poor, where they were "instructed in their religion, taught to write and read and to spin cotton, and were kept till marriageable, when a regulated portion of their earnings was given them as a marriage portion."

The charitable schemes and unflagging religion of the De Noailles race we shall hope to reveal in these pages. Angels are few and far between. It is almost incredible to find a whole band of them, especially a band living together and tied to each other by relationship. Yet this improbable conception is realized by the De Noailles. They were not only the greatest family in France after Royalty, they were also perhaps the largest. Wherever we look amongst them, we find noble minds and holy souls. The old Maréchal de Mouchy and his wife, who perished at eighty on the scaffold; their daughter, Madame de Duras, who survived the Terror and left us

her Prison Journals; the Duchesse d'Ayen and the five daughters whom she cherished—all these shone then, and shine for us now, like "good deeds in a naughty world." They did not think much of its naughtiness, but preferred to love its inhabitants, especially the poor and humble.

White-robed and silent, they glide forth from the land of shadows. We wait for them to break the silence. And if we can look upon them with spiritual imagination, they will slowly revive; they will tell us their tale of suffering, tranquillity and meek victory. Their simplicity alone is equal to the task. It is time they should stand forth and speak for themselves.

The d'Ayens

CHAPTER I

The d'Ayens

THE history of Society has many pleasant secrets and refreshing surprises. None is perhaps more charming than the discovery of those rare families, whose members, widely different in nature, seem all pervaded by the same atmosphere. They are stamped with an impress, a common personality, which rather sets off than weakens individual character, and makes its possessors easy of recognition. This impress is usually the gift of the parents—most frequently of the mother. Her ideas, her aspirations, create a spirit which unconsciously dominates the household, and is readily responded to by those who are moulded of her flesh and blood. There grows up a "family perception" which establishes its especial *Lares*; a family humour with its own intimate flavour; a family attitude towards joy and sorrow, life and conduct, which cannot be borrowed by any other tribe. Such families are likely to find within their own limits the excitement of companionship, so necessary in existence, which others have to seek outside. Their feeling for each other becomes a passion; it unites an almost lover-like eagerness with the sweet safety of natural habit. They constitute not only a clan, but a social circle.

People of this kind are *raræ aves*, yet the diligent collector can find a considerable number of their nests.

The Gracchi are perhaps the first instance on record, but he need have no recourse to class-room specimens. The last three hundred years will furnish him with sufficient names. There are the beautiful Sheridans, with their tradition of romance and unflagging brilliance; the Mendelssohns, with their cultured piety, and that peculiar gift of creation which was made to illumine a home; the Gurneys, mercurial and religious; the seventeenth century Arnaulds, of Port Royal, who embraced charity as fervently as they did dogma; the literary, talkative Burneys, who wrote their journals, sipped their tea, and adored their father and each other in utmost content by their fireside; the Brontës, with their fiery stoicism and their wild poet-hearts; or, in still more recent days, Mrs. Craven's family, the De la Ferronays, whose genius for sorrow is only equalled by their genius for expressing it exquisitely. Last, but not least, we have the De Noailles, embalmed in family love, who drew their inspiration from their mother, the Duchesse d'Ayen, and bore her ineffaceable seal upon their souls from childhood to the grave.

The Chancellor d'Aguesseau was her grandfather. She was born in 1737, and her mother died at her birth. Her father married again, and sent her at three years old to a convent. Here she was placed under the special charge of a governess, Madame d'Héricourt, a woman of tender heart and firm will, who made virtue appear charming. The child soon showed a remarkable nature—a mixture of conscience, sober sense, impatience, and spiritual fervour. At five years old, she became absorbed in the Lives of the Saints, but prayed earnestly that she might not resemble them, because she had such a horror of seeing the visions that they did. From her earliest years she preferred austerity to asceticism. When she was still

a child, the game of chess fascinated her; but perceiving that it pre-occupied her so strongly as to distract her attention at High Mass on Sundays, she refused to play at the game on Saturdays; and if she had once made a resolution, she did not swerve from it. At fourteen, her father, Monsieur de Fresnes, took her away from the convent, and she came home. She and her step-mother got on well together; and Mademoiselle d'Aufroy, the companion her parents chose for her, became her life-long friend. Gaiety and sanctity distinguished the Duchesse d'Ayen's youth: sanctity warmed by impulsiveness and a spice of occasional intolerance. As she was now, she always remained—sweet, and a little severe. Her standard was high, and she was inclined to put herself into other people, and feel disappointed at their shortcomings. Sometimes she spoke sharply to the servants; but, *grande dame* though she was, she always begged their pardon afterwards. She was, after all, a true woman; and though her mind was solid, it was uncertain. Tranquil in manner and in the big decisions of life, she agitated herself over small things. She did not think them worth referring to faith, but in important matters she threw herself upon God, and calm came to her at once.

Soon after she grew up, her maternal grandfather died, and embarrassed her greatly by leaving her a large fortune. Riches were a burden to her and a hateful symbol of inequality; but she would not reject the responsibilities they entailed, and held them as a trust for the poor. She contrived to diminish her heritage by as many benefactions as possible, and gave away half of her substance.

At eighteen, her marriage was arranged with the Duc d'Ayen, two years younger than herself, and the eldest son of the Duc and Maréchal de Noailles. His personality

has been somewhat eclipsed by hers, yet he was a man of considerable parts and noble purposes. Strange to say, in making a choice for their devout daughter, her parents seem to have dwelt little upon the question of religious agreement. The Duke belonged to the philosophers—and to those philosophers who did not despise the world, or even the court, where, like all the men of his name, he spent much of his time. He inherited a bold, juicy wit from the old Marshal, and his eager mind was as busy with agriculture as with court intrigues, military administration and philosophy. He was considered one of the most enlightened *Seigneurs*, was a member of the *Académie de Sciences*, and distinguished himself by the papers he read there. His attitude towards life and religion was intelligent, but not exalted ; it might be summed up by the reply of the soldier to Tom Jones, when he refused, as a Christian, to fight in a duel : "My dear boy, be a good Christian . . . but be a man of honour too, and never put up an affront."

To the Duc d'Ayen honour was dearer than anything, excepting his wife. He adored her from the first. Her attachment to him, if not as warm, was as true ; perhaps they did not always sympathize upon fundamental subjects, but her happiness was not affected. "God had above all made her to be a mother," and she was soon to find this out.

After her marriage she was presented at Versailles, and then retired to the stately seclusion of the Hôtel de Noailles. Here she lived quietly with her husband's family : his mother ; his father ; his brother, the Marshal ; the Marquis, and his two sisters. Conventional society, though she by no means despised it, was not to her taste, and she found enough excitement in learning to know her

new relations. Of these, her husband's sisters, the Duchesse de Lesparre and the Comtesse de Tessé, soon became prominent in her life; and in Madame de Lesparre she found a strong support. "There was no agitation which did not grow calm, no sort of tribulation which was not softened, and for which one did not gain a little strength, when one had spent a short time with Madame de Lesparre. It was not so much her mind as her soul which illumined her, and yet one always found new lights in her company."

So wrote her niece, Madame Lafayette, years afterwards. Madame de Tessé, she tells us, was not so intimate with her mother. Her religious opinions would alone have prevented this. She was a warm-hearted free-thinker, had been a great friend of Voltaire's, and, far from regarding the priests as invulnerable representatives of their Maker, she looked upon them as men who from their position, were peculiarly liable to error; in spite of this, she made them the ministers of her charity and poured bounty upon such of them as were in distress. She lived, besides, in a world far remote from her sister-in-law's: the world of wits and scholars, where dulness was the only sin, and thought, however daring, could never be considered impious. Indeed, she bore a great reputation for mind, from her youth onwards, and, with her emphatic nature, adopted all that was implied by such fame, intellectual affectations as well as intellectual doubts. She had a "little language" of her own, not reserved for one person like Swift's, but addressed to Society at large, and so abstruse that it demanded a private interpreter. Her strongly-marked features were full of character, but she had no beauty excepting her thick black hair, and her face was marked by small-pox. In spite of this, she

was a conscientious votary of the ridiculous fashion then prevalent amongst literary women, of making prescribed grimaces at stated intervals in conversation. She, and a lady of the Richelieu family, were the last of these *femmes minaudières* who appear in the great world; and they even persisted in their pedantries of deportment at a time when "*les mines et les mouches*" were no longer in vogue. It was not only the airs and graces of the literary that attracted her; she also adopted their emotions. When she was in England, she made a pilgrimage to the grave of her hero, Richardson, in company with his son-in-law; we have a glimpse of her prostrate upon his tomb, groaning aloud, her body shaken with sobs. It was all quite as sincere as it was exaggerated. Her wasp-like contemporary, Madame de Genlis, it is true, declared that "Madame de Tessé had mind, but knew it too well, was too eager to show it, and spoke a private language in order to give people a higher idea of her brain." But the writer was incapable of judging a woman as free from malice as Madame de Tessé. Eccentric in all she said, thought, and did, she gave herself away in manners as in everything else, with the vehement generosity that coloured her.

She wisely chose a counteracting husband of a chilly and phlegmatic temperament. He never spoke to her, but, after twenty years of silence and indifference, vastly amused Paris by presenting her with a snuff-box inscribed with the hottest love-passage from "Phèdre." After this action—apparently the one exploit of his life—he relapsed into the shade again, and, like many husbands of remarkable wives, possesses no further relations with history.

Perhaps Madame de Tessé inherited her eccentricity, though not her intellect, from her far less notable mother.

The Maréchale was the exception to the Noailles law of saintliness. She presents an erratic contrast of family pride, stately childishness, and conventional vagaries. Devout she was, but her piety took the dubious form of religious kleptomania. She could not keep her hands off sacred relics, and, on one occasion, it required all the Noailles influence to rescue her from excommunication. She had stolen the arm of Ste. Geneviève from the chapel of some nuns, pounded it and dissolved it in medicine to cure the Duc d'Ayen, her eldest son, of scarlet fever. With some difficulty, they extricated her from her dilemma, only to learn a few days afterwards that a precious Eucharistic chalice had disappeared from another church, in like manner. She had other habits, equally innocent, impious, and inconvenient. For instance, she kept up a constant correspondence with the Virgin Mary, posted her letters in a dovecote and never suspected that it was her priest who answered them. "What familiarity!" she once exclaimed; "this little *bourgeoise* of Nazareth addresses me as 'Dear *Maréchale de la troisième ligne*'—but I must remember that she is my Saviour's mother (here she bowed her head), and, after all, she *does* come of the Royal House of David." Sometimes her whims took a rather less extravagant form, as when she insisted that all her elderly grand-nephews should be painted as Cupids and distinguished from middle-class Loves by having the Order of Malta represented upon their shoulders. There is perhaps nothing which makes us so intimate with people as admission to a family joke; and when we hear that the grave de Noailles could never stop laughing at the thought of this picture, our stiffness disappears, and we walk in and out of their doors with a courtly friendship which is very near freedom. But

even whilst we laugh with them, there rises before our eyes a vision of this same lady, borne in a tumbril, with uncomplaining dignity, to the scaffold. Her aberrations are not the part of her by which she will be best remembered.

It was amongst these relations that the Duchesse d'Ayen's children grew up. The first of these, a boy, was born two years after her marriage and died after twenty-four hours' illness, when he was barely a year old. Her sorrow could only be measured by her love; religion was her one consolation, and she said in after days that she was often strengthened by her conviction that there was no greater saint in heaven than the baby who had left her. Twelve months later came a girl, Louise, Vicomtesse de Noailles. At first the mother's heart could not welcome the new-comer; it seemed like disloyalty to her lost lamb; but a serious illness, which nearly robbed her for the second time, made her once more feel all the vitality of affection, and she allowed herself to indulge in joy. A year after came Adrienne (afterwards Madame Lafayette); then a third sister, doomed to die young, in childbirth. She was closely followed by Anne Paul Dominique, or Pauline (Madame de Montagu) and Rosalie (Madame de Grammont), whose feeling for each other presents an almost Biblical picture of common prayer and piety.

The Duchess began their education early. Every mother is in some degree a poet, and sees the possibilities in her children even more strongly than the realities; but the Duchesse d'Ayen added science to romance. She followed every movement of her daughters' lives without seeming to do so, and was careful to regard her children's confidence as a courtesy, instead of claiming it as a right.

She knew every one of them separately with a deep and subtle knowledge and a boundless force of tenderness for each. Herself impetuous, as well as serene, she understood both calm and stormy natures, and her constant vision of God made her indulgent rather than exacting. From the first, she rejected the prevailing fashion of leaving them to the care of others, and made a point of seeing them herself and of supervising their doings.

Every day she gave them a good-morning kiss; saw them again on her way to Mass at the Jacobins' Church of St. Roch; dined with them at three o'clock, and then took them up to her bedroom for several hours with her. This time was always too short for them; they loved even the furniture associated with it. The room was large, and hung with crimson damask brocaded with gold; the bed was immense. "The Duchess sat in a rocking chair, near the mantel-piece, with her snuff-box, her books, her needles, close at hand; her five daughters grouped themselves round her—the bigger ones on chairs, the smaller on foot-stools—and disputed gently which should be nearest the rocking chair." Whilst their needles embroidered, they gossiped about the little events of the moment. A minute report of their sayings and doings during the day was brought to her every night by their guardians, and they themselves told her in the evening all they had seen, heard, and learned, since they rose in the morning. It was these intimate bed-time interviews which were most constantly the occasion for the moral lessons, which were learned with such unconsciousness. What they described to her was her text, and it was thus that, from the earliest days, she accustomed them to live largely and well. Prejudices, narrowness, even vanity, were long unknown to them, and when they first went forth into the world, the

conduct of the so-called *honnêtes gens* there, caused them "an amazement which it took years to get over."

Certain of their studies she always kept in her own hands. Ever eager to imbue them with the love of beauty—which she considered part of the love of goodness—she often read poetry with them, besides her favourite prose. She taught them to analyze its beauties as well as to admire them, and formed their taste by surrounding them with sweet influences. But nothing really pleased her that did not need moral imagination. She would have quarrelled with Dr. Johnson. "Babies do not want to hear about babies," he said; "they like to be told of giants and castles and of somewhat which can stretch and stimulate their little minds." The Duchess disapproved of the whole elfin race. Like Plato, who forbade fiction as enervating, she banished fairy tales from the nursery. But as her babies were not the property of the State, they managed to teach her inconsistency. She was, after all, a living fairy godmother. Besides, they were not devoid of fantastic literature; the "Lives of the Saints" were on their nursery shelves.

There was, writes Madame Lafayette, nothing absolute in her manner of teaching, correcting, or guiding; she considered herself to have done nothing if she had not convinced the child to whom she was speaking; and although she was naturally indolent, of a very impatient character, and perhaps too little accustomed to repress her vivacity, she listened to all the arguments of her children with persevering kindness. These qualities had their drawbacks. Frequent reasoning led to waste of time; and she was also heard to observe that her daughters were less docile than others. "Small wonder, mamma," answered Adrienne, "because you always allow us to

argue and object; but you will see that at fifteen we shall be much more docile than other girls." The maternal lessons in practical logic had evidently not been wasted on this second daughter. The necessity for coherence had ever been impressed upon her. "Above all," she says, "our mother concentrated her force in forming our judgment and taught us to make solid reflections upon every fresh object. Penetrated by truth as she was, her first care was always to remove any obscurity of thought."

This is all very serious, and if it had no context would merely suggest Edgeworthian methods, excellent but charmless. The Parent's Assistant had no time for unction —probably no taste for it—and there is no worse-mannered child in fiction than the ever inquisitive Frank. The Duchess did not stop at lucid common sense. She was always more of a bold artist than of a polished scholar in education. Pedantry was so hateful to her that she steered clear of system, and perhaps lost as much of her time in doing without it as she did by filial argument. But though she had no neatly fixed scheme, she possessed something larger: the consolidating religious fervour, so lacking in Miss Edgeworth, which is a liberal education in itself. "She worked with all her mother's tenderness," writes Madame Lafayette again, "to bring the truth within our ken. . . . She desired that everything we perceived should present a whole to us. Principles, morality, the history of facts, examples and the way to profit by them, all was related and bound together in her lessons, as in the designs of God."

Spiritual welfare is much dwelled on in our serious, self-weighted Britain; but spiritual distinction, the culture of the soul, which alone creates an alluring tradition, belongs to a less Puritan atmosphere. It was certainly the living

legacy of the Duchesse d'Ayen, and the chief piece of learning with which she enriched her daughters.

Like all exceptional people, she found exceptional servants. Her nurse, though only an illiterate peasant, had a gift for training children and amused them for hours by convent anecdotes, or stories from the Old Testament. Later on she was replaced by a governess, Mademoiselle Marin, "a little person, fair, pinched-looking, huffy, but devoted to her duties." Governesses of a hundred and forty years ago were evidently much like the governesses of to-day, and so were little girls. These particular ones learned the proper number of *catéchismes* and stately primers, and were, in due course, promoted to the study of the spheres and other branches of elegant learning. They had their treats too. They paid yearly visits to their grandparents in the country, and wandered hand-in-hand with the old Marshal in the woods, or won crown-pieces from him at Loto all the evening.

Sometimes Mademoiselle Marin led forth a donkey cavalcade to Meudon, herself timidly but pompously mounted. She never failed to fall off on the grass, or to scold the Samaritan who rescued her, or indeed to adore the whole d'Ayen family, during twenty-seven years of faithful intercourse.

Work and play alternated and the years flew. There was no modern pressure, but the few things they learned they assimilated. Their minds and their brains communicated with one another, instead of being ingenious mechanisms with no necessary relations. Nor was their physical education neglected. Their mother was original enough in those sedentary days to let them share their young uncle's lessons in drill and gymnastics. Perhaps

she helped to form the fine constitutions which afterwards survived the rigours of prison and even of starvation.

Their father they saw but rarely; most of his life had to be spent between the army and Versailles, where he had inherited the King's intimacy. He was Colonel of his regiment, and distinguished himself in the Seven Years' War; but though a soldier before all things, his tongue was almost as nimble as his sword, and when peace came, he liked to frequent the brilliant world of conversation. He always impressed his children, but they were rather afraid of him, and looked on him less as their parent than as the husband of their mother.

Thus, fed by dew and sunshine, and shaded by her presence, these five girls expanded and blossomed. Never were sisters so closely bound, so like, or so different. Louise, the eldest, was radiant, saintly, and serene, like a limpid lake which gives back the reflection of heaven unblurred by any ripple. Adrienne was more intellectual and more intense; sweetness and storm were strangely mingled in her, combined with her father's keen wits, and she confessed that she often had enough work to do in managing herself. Her mother did her best to help her. "She always led my over-strong imagination back to the true and simple," she wrote, "and though I must confess that in childhood she had perhaps let me perceive her pride in me too plainly, yet she knew how to correct my conceit about this by a delineation of my faults so vivid, true, and vigorous, that it constantly recurred to me, and each time pierced my heart like an arrow." But these barb-like faults were not very grave; Adrienne's storms were of the soul—her intensity of the heart; the shadow of self never troubled her.

The third daughter was the least notable, and more of

a family representative than an individual; she seems to have possessed a little of each sister, without having enough of any quality to distinguish her. Then came Anne Paul Dominique, whose grand name had been bestowed on her by a poor old man and his wife from the parish of St. Roch, the godparents whom the Duchess had chosen for her; but it was soon replaced by the more familiar "Pauline." She had all the impatience of her mother's temper beside its sweetness, and was naturally capricious, even rebellious. "She was ruled by her impressions and refused any other yoke. One saw her pass in one moment from the most vehement anger to effusions of repentance, and, an instant later, relapse into the faults she had bewailed." But this was only till she was nearly twelve; at that mature period of life, she underwent a conversion as striking as it was steady, for its effects lasted till her death. She became gentle, patient, studious, and not only subjected herself to common obligations, but also to much severer rules which she was accustomed to make out for herself. This miracle of will was in some measure owing to her mother's counsels, but much more to the example of her little sister, whom she began by slapping, and proceeded to love and admire passionately. Rosalie was only her junior by a year, and shared Pauline's work and play. Though she was the youngest, her force of character made her develope early; equable, pious, and almost precocious, she always remained the austerest of the sisters; but her severity never extended beyond herself, and there was no discipline, no religious exercise that was too hard for her. She is the only one of the sisters of whom we have a personal description in youth. "She had small eyes, a slightly square chin, and features that were irregular, but pleasing because of their expression;

they were full at the same time of strength, calm, and modesty."

Her sway over Pauline never decreased; Adrienne was influenced in much the same way by Louise, who had great power to calm her, and, as it were, to bathe her spirit in serenity. Indeed, there was between these five sisters a love as exalted as their mother's feeling for them—a love which would have been idolatry had they not always chosen the truly holy in one another to admire. One of the most striking features of their comradeship is the humility which stimulated each to imitate the other's virtues and to acknowledge the other's help with bounteous praise.

In 1768, their mother was again expecting a child. She fell very ill and became convinced that she was about to die. The idea that she would have to leave her children while they were still so young, was unendurable to her. She confided her anguish to a friend — probably her director. "Do you think yourself needful to God?" he replied, "has He no means but yourself to save them?" The answer revived her and she took courage. A short while after, small-pox declared itself, and in the midst of this illness her long-desired son was born. Her life was despaired of. The nature of her complaint was hidden from her, but her sufferings made her aware of her danger. When they came to her bedside and told her that the child was a boy, she said to Mademoiselle d'Aufroy—her faithful companion, as of old—"This gift from God does not frighten me; it is not made to a Jew but to a Christian: it is accompanied by the Cross."

Her husband's grief about her hardly allowed him to notice his infant. To him she was always first; and in order to prevent her discovering that she had small-pox,

he actually allowed all the children to come to her when she asked for them, though Adrienne had never had the terrible complaint. It is still a question whether faith that overthrows common-sense partakes more of piety or impiety, but in this case there were no evil consequences. The baby prospered and the mother recovered. When all risk was over, her daughters were told of the sorrow they had so narrowly escaped. But overcome though they were, it was impossible for children to realize the idea of death; their emotion was nothing to that with which, from the garden, they gazed for the first time on their mother's changed face at her window, and saw—through the panes —the ravages small-pox had made in it. "None of the tragedies that came afterwards," writes Adrienne, "could ever efface the remembrance of our misery at the thought that we should never again see her as she was before."

The Duke meanwhile was much occupied in arranging that his daughters' fortunes should not be impaired by the arrival of his son. His wife began to be troubled; she feared lest the boy's advantages should wed him to the world; though she cared for him, if possible, more than for the others, she allowed this dread to perturb her joy and agitate her mind. On Holy Thursday, she went to pray at the Sepulchre, and returned calm and happy once again. "I have just killed my son," she said, on coming home, to Mademoiselle d'Aufroy, "and I am rather afraid about my daughters. If any of them fall ill, I shall be greatly alarmed; I have offered them all to God, so that He may restore them to me for eternity. But I hope He will leave me my girls. I think He has accepted my boy and that I shall not keep him." So deep was this impression of hers, that when the baby began to ail, she never had an

instant's hope. It grew worse and was pronounced to be consumptive. Yet after months of suffering, when it lay dying in her arms, her spirit was still upheld by her certainty. "Darling, you have won a great victory," she whispered in its ear; "nothing can now divide us or tear us from one another for all eternity." Even in the long days that followed her loss, the calm of her grief remained. She saw by the light of death, which glorified tears and shadows, and sanctified her strength.

Happily her other children were there, and as they grew older, needed her more and more. Three years passed away. Louise and Adrienne were thirteen and twelve years old, on the threshold of womanhood and of an age then considered suitable for marriage. The time had come for the event which their mother considered the most crucial of their lives. They had already been confirmed: they were now to make ready for their first Communion —to approach that Altar which for her was the place on earth nearest to heaven. With Louise, it was a simple matter; her spirit waited patiently for revelation and could only be satisfied by mystery. It was far harder for Adrienne. Her adventurous mind was content with nothing less than the root of the matter, while her vivid imagination often overmastered her. She had become absorbed in theological subjects, and just before she turned twelve, her poor little mind began to be tormented by religious doubts. Like most juvenile sceptics, she took herself very seriously, and it seemed to her that she was disloyal to her mother as well as her God. She said afterwards that in all her life of care and sorrow she had never felt a pain like this one. Half proud and half ashamed, she hid it from her dear ones, and as she tried to cure herself by pursuing her devotions more fervently than ever,

concealment was not difficult. But she decided that she could not take her first Communion, and the dread of announcing this fact oppressed her heavily. Happily her mother had no need of words; she discovered Adrienne's secret, approved her decision, and devoted all her powers of tenderness to consoling her. Unlike her contemporaries, this good lady dreaded ecclesiastical discussions, and preferred her conscience to her director in such a matter. Far from adopting the speedy methods of Dr. Boyer, who flogged Coleridge every day till he had found a God, she did not even argue. The innocent unbeliever returned to the fold, though she took her time and did not celebrate her first Sacrament till three years afterwards, just after the birth of her eldest child.

For this tender little novice was beset not only by thorns spiritual, but by thorns matrimonial. At the same moment that her difficulties began, just about her twelfth birthday, two suitors presented themselves: the Vicomte de Noailles for Louise, and his friend the Marquis de Lafayette for Adrienne. The mother said nothing of this to the girls; she did not wish them to be distracted from their education, and considered them too young to think of such matters for another year at least. None the less, she suffered acutely at the thought of giving them away. No sign betrayed what she was going through. She seemed to others even calmer than usual. "We know so little what will be the consequences of decisive events in our lives," she was wont to tell her daughters, "that all we can do at such crises is to put away every passion as much as possible, conduct ourselves according to the law of reason and duty, and never attach ourselves exclusively to any one idea in particular; then if we have taken all precautions and have no negligence wherewith to reproach ourselves,

we need do nothing but submit peacefully to the law of God, who best knows what is fitting for us." She now practised her precepts and prayed in silence.

It sometimes seems as if people's characters created their circumstances and even the individuals that come into their lives. The elder girl's lover, and first cousin, the Vicomte de Noailles, was as sweet, as sane, as finely balanced as herself; he pursued every noble reform as fervently as he hated every violence. His father, the Maréchal Mouchy de Noailles, was a pious hero who retired to his estate and helped his own peasants at the plough. His mother and his sister (Madame de Duras) shared the old man's views, and lived for God and their poor. His elder brother, the Prince de Poix, was the purest light of Parisian Society, and together with his wife made his home a meeting-place for all the finer spirits of his day; artists, writers, ecclesiastics and liberal nobles came together there, attracted by a hospitality which excluded nothing but triviality. There could be no objection to a marriage with such a Viscount, and the parental consent was immediately given. But for a year, nothing was said to Louise of the proposal. During this period it was arranged by her mother that she should frequently meet her cousin, either during her walks or at home. The girl had always been used to him, and perhaps the Duchess, who knew her tender but passionless nature, had taken this into account. Habit was essential to Louise's happiness, and when, after twelve months, the marriage was suggested to her, she felt no shock and gladly consented. Some months of preparations followed—preparations both spiritual and practical. For whilst the mother tried gradually to fit her daughter's soul for all the possibilities of married life, she also saw that she was taught every intricacy of

stately housekeeping and domestic knowledge. The marriage was celebrated in 1773; an April wedding of sun and shower for mother and sisters, to whom this first break in their circle seemed almost a tragedy; but, as it proved, Louise was hardly separated from them, though she lived much with her mother-in-law at Versailles. When she did not come to Paris, the Duc d'Ayen's Court functions made it easy for her mother to go to her, and the close family tradition remained unbroken.

Very different was Adrienne's fate. Her lover and her love-story were alike stormy. The Marquis de Lafayette was only fourteen and a half; his near relations had died, and he had grown up under lax guardianship, with a large fortune already in his possession. His character was noble, but as passionate as Adrienne's, and wholly untrained. The Duchess admired it, but she thought his wealth and his circumstances so undesirable, that she summarily refused the match. The Duke, who saw all the advantages of such a union, was for once seriously angry with her. As she persisted in her decision, they separated and held no communication. The children were aware of the breach, without knowing its cause; for the first time in their lives they were depressed, and the cloud did not roll away till the memorable day in 1772 when their father returned and their parents were reconciled.

"You do not know Madame d'Ayen," the Duke had exclaimed, while still in the midst of his displeasure with her; "however rash she is, you may be sure she will recant her error directly you have proved to her that she is in the wrong; but she will never yield if she does not see it."

During the year of their difference, she had learned to know M. de Lafayette's character and to admire its possi-

bilities. Her mother's heart was touched by his forlornness and his response to her. When his guardians consented to finish his education, to wait two years for the marriage, and to allow her daughter to live with her for some time after it, she gave in and adopted him as her son. There was no one in after days who appreciated him as she did, or who did such justice to his motives when all the world misunderstood him.

Adrienne was allowed to meet him in the same casual way that her sister met the Viscount, without knowing that he had asked for her hand. Long before this fact was confided to her, she had given away her heart; so overjoyed was she at the thought of her marriage, that even her mother could hardly "help her to keep her poor head at this crisis." It was as full of dreams as her bridegroom's: dreams for the happiness of the world—for their own happiness in a noble disguise. And when, two months after her sister's wedding, she stood with him at the altar, their joy was complete. They had no misgivings, not even a foreboding of the way in which their dreams were to be fulfilled.

For two more years they returned to the care of Madame d'Ayen, sometimes in Paris, sometimes at Versailles. She had made up her mind that, in view of their future positions, both brides should know more of society, and perhaps she had never made a greater nor a gayer sacrifice than when she accompanied them to the balls at St. Germain, or gave her little suppers at home. But she was determined that her sons-in-law should not find home tedious, and that her own husband should be satisfied. She had no fears for her girls. Though they shone and liked to shine, the glittering atmosphere did not suit them, and they were never so happy as when they

were driving home from their dissipations in their great coach. In 1775, Adrienne left her mother's tender tutelage, and she and her husband set up house for themselves.

Lafayette

CHAPTER II

Lafayette

ONE night, in 1776, the old Marshal de Broglie, Commander of the forces at Strassburg, was giving a dinner party in honour of the Duke of Gloucester. This light-hearted Duke had just married the Countess Waldegrave, and being in deep disgrace with his royal brother, George III., he took this compulsory occasion for a trip abroad. He was maliciously regaling the table, at the King's expense, by a humorous account of America's affront to England and the scene with the tea chests in Boston Harbour. His sympathy was all with the rebels, and he dwelt on their need of recruits. This was the first that France had heard of American Independence. Amongst his numerous audience—officers in blue and silver, Strassburg grandees in gold lace and velvet, exclaiming, laughing, gesticulating—was one silent, solemn-faced young soldier. He was lean, red-haired, hook-nosed, very awkward. He might have seemed insignificant, had it not been for his eager eyes; and indifferent, had he not kept them intent on the speaker's face. Nobody noticed him. After dinner he strode across the room to the Duke and opened his lips for the first time. His manner was calm, almost cold. "I will join the Americans — I will help them fight for Freedom!" he cried, and, as he spoke, his face was illuminated—"Tell me how to set about it."

This was the Marquis de Lafayette, now nineteen years old, the adoring husband of a lady who returned his attachment; already the father of one child, and now expecting another. The anecdote is an epitome of the man. He was ruled by two passions—the one for his wife, the other for Freedom; and the latter was the stronger of the two. In his pursuit of Liberty under all her Protean forms—a pursuit sometimes stern, always sanguine, and maintained through a long life—he has never been rivalled, unless it be by Mr. Gladstone in our own day. Yet Lafayette was not a modern Radical. With the old French manners, he had an English mind, even in its stiffness, and shone by character rather than by gifts. He was always a Whig: something more primitive than a Whig even. Perhaps the nearest parallel to him is Hampden, the Knight of the Constitution, who fought every abuse, though he never created a law.

Lafayette was, if we may use the expression, an abstract man. He always lived in a rarefied atmosphere of general principles and ethical deductions. Such people are generally wanting in detail; they have a grand outline, but the lovable ups and downs, the personal incidents which vary the highroad, are not to be found in them. They need great occasions if they are to use their qualities; they are not practical statesmen; and at an average moment—a period of ordinary political expediency, of Secondary Education Acts and minor financial Bills—they either fall flat, or are set down as Utopian. But heroic times demand whole ideals; such times can only be met by heroes, and heroes must always be young. Lafayette had eternal youth. His abstract notions never failed him, nor seemed less real than at the outset; and, fortunately for him, he was born just before the French Revolution — that Minotaur of

events which devoured every ideal that could be offered to it.

Lafayette's career was bound to be full of romance. We expect it from his parentage and education. He was of the same blood as the spiritual Mademoiselle de Lafayette, the close friend of Louis XIII.; she followed her vocation and became a nun, in spite of his love for her; in spite of the secret feeling that "kept her too long glued to the grating" when he visited her afterwards in her convent. Later on, the family was glorified by the great Madame de Lafayette, who wrote her books and counselled La Rochefoucauld from her couch of suffering. Perhaps the young Marquis inherited his awkwardness from her husband, who was so clumsy that his first salutation of her aroused the mirth of the whole family. "He will do, though I daresay he's a blockhead," was her cordial acceptance of him, after which they lived happily (though apart) for ever afterwards. An old rhyme in their honour tells us how they managed it: *he* went—

". . . à sa terre
Comme Monsieur son père";

she wrote—

"Des romans à Paris
Avec les beaux-esprits."

Two generations later, Lafayette's father was born. He was a soldier all his life, and died in the Seven Years' War by the hand of the same General Phillips whom his son encountered in Virginia years afterwards. The boy was born after his death, in September, 1757, at the ancestral Castle of Chavaniac. Here he lived alone with his mother; the forest was his school, and the birds were his playmates. His most worldly aspiration was to meet a wolf of which the rumour scared the country during his childhood. Unlike other

young French nobles, he had never seen Paris, and had neither learned to dance nor to pick up a fan. Later he went to the College of Plessis, where, like many other boys of twelve, he composed an essay on a horse, which his friends considered a masterpiece. We also have a letter of his written at this period to his cousin and crony, the Comte de Ségur, which shows his swift development in understanding of life. It is full of knowing comments on his fashionable elders' love and money-affairs. Soon we find him transferred to the Military Academy at Versailles where he stayed till he got his commission as officer in the Black Musketeers. Then came his marriage, which first introduced him to the Court. Here we know that the de Noailles enjoyed a high position—so high that, when the Queen raised her confidante, Madame de Polignac, to the best situation there, the Maréchale de Noailles felt it her duty to resign. For their sake, Lafayette was immediately well received, but he soon found favour for his own.

Marie Antoinette is too often represented as the hostess of the young, gay, and beautiful alone; she had a gift of social, perhaps of deeper insight, which is apt to be overlooked in the splendour of her fascinations. Youth in itself was not enough for her; what she cared for most was originality, and such of her contemporaries as possessed it she delighted to gather about her. Madame Lebrun, with her painting palette and her eccentricities; Madame de Genlis, with her adventurous pedantries and her soothing harp, were amongst her friends; and just at the time of Lafayette's wedding, she had pleased to form round herself a choice circle of original young men. They called themselves the Société de l'Épée aux Bois, and represented the elect of grace and wit.

Their sayings, their doings, their dances, their intellectual pranks, were the talk of Versailles; the old courtiers wagged their heads over them and hated them frankly as adventurous votaries of all that was new; the younger ones admired them at a distance, and tried to penetrate their Masonic mysteries.

Lafayette was bored by light talk, and could not dance the minuet; yet it was into this exclusive set that he was welcomed. The Queen had detected the quality of his mind. She adopted him as a favourite, and was repaid by his chivalrous devotion. The other members of the club became his boon-companions. There were M. d'Artois, the King's brother, nicknamed "the Prince of Youth," and the Comte de Ségur, besides the two Dillons and both the de Lameths—names destined to be ever near the Queen's: now in all the confidence of youthful friendship, later in the tragedy of debate as to whether or no she might live. Even then their circle was more significant than they themselves knew. It existed only to scandalize the old nobles, and the difference between the two parties grew to be a formal feud between Conservatives and Liberals. When, amid bursts of mirth, they acted for the Queen an impromptu skit on the *Parlement* then sitting, there was deep satire below the fun and the glitter. The Tory lords complained to the King, who summoned M. d'Artois, like a naughty schoolboy; but even he could not restrain his royal laughter at his brother's account of the proceedings. The courtiers were furious, and took their next chance of getting the last word. Tired of eighteenth century habits, the Épée aux Bois resolved to assume the dress and language of Henry IV.'s time. They lavished gold on sumptuous costumes and fantastic pageants. Considerately wishful to include their foes in the joke, they

planned a quadrille for the Court ball, in which dancers and spectators were to appear in mediæval clothes, irrespective of age and figure. The King's permission was gained by his wife, and a storm burst. The elderly peers, who were most of them stout, fumed, vociferated, and refused to make fools of themselves. The malicious beaux insisted that they would look ravishing. At last the King was appealed to and forced to retract his assent; the quadrille was never danced; the Épée aux Bois had gone too far, and came to an abrupt end.

Lafayette had already grown tired of his Court life and was glad to withdraw to his regiment at Strassburg. He felt uneasy—as if he had not yet found his vent. The Queen had appreciated his mind; but nobody—not even himself—had yet discovered his character.

His connections, like those of other folk, were the last people to know him as he was. Before his engagement, they made active efforts to awaken him. His comrade, the young Comte de Ségur, was much amused at receiving a stately visit from the old Maréchal de Noailles to urge him, in the name of all the family, to rouse Lafayette from his torpor and make him take an interest in something. The Count had just escaped from the vehemence of his friend, who had for hours been urging him to fight an unnecessary duel on behalf of a lady. Lafayette had been hotly enamoured of her for some days and insisted that de Ségur was so too, though that gentleman knew nothing about it and would have preferred a touch of the indolence he was asked to cure.

The de Noailles continued to misunderstand the young man after he had become one of them, and found him wofully perverse. They almost succeeded in procuring him a desirable place about the person of the Duke of

Provence, afterwards Louis XVIII., but Lafayette found this out and resolved to have none of it. He contrived to meet the Duke at a masked ball, and poured into his ear such a farrago of Liberalism that his chances were effectually destroyed. "I shall remember this interview," said the Duke haughtily. "Memory," rejoined Lafayette, "is the wit of fools." This was not soothing, and his family can hardly be blamed for complaining of him. Unfortunately, the more they did so, the less capable he became of showing them his true self. "His reluctance to talk and his chilly, serious manner were always remarkable," says a contemporary, "but never as much so as in his youth, when they contrasted strangely with the petulant brilliance of his companions."

With all his heroism, indeed, his deportment was conventional, and his regularity of conduct unbroken; yet beneath this calm there was an erratic vein, a spirit of rashness, which pushed him to sudden, if not unexpected deeds. It was so on the night that he met the Duke of Gloucester. He had decided in one moment to go to America, and long hours of argument did not move him. He had enough opposition. His own relations were furious, but they had little power over him. The d'Ayens, whom he loved, were almost as angry. The idea that he should leave their daughter so soon after marriage, as well as transfer his service from his King to another continent, seemed to them preposterous. The Duchess tried intercession, the Duke admonition—all in vain. Adrienne alone entered into his purpose with heroic sympathy. She believed in the good of the world—still more that he was appointed to accomplish it. After her first passionate entreaties and dismay that he would be absent when their child was born, she prayed for guidance. And

when the guidance came she prayed for strength, for she felt sure that God willed he should go ; all that remained was to speed him on his way. She hid her feelings, and pretended gaiety ; she liked better to be thought childish or cold-hearted, than that he should be blamed. Her mother came to her aid ; after an interview with her son-in-law, she no longer blamed him. Though she deplored the dangers he must incur, she learned to admire his enterprise and to discriminate it from boyish adventure. A noble purpose was always safe with her. Madame de Tessé, who was daily growing more political, also became his champion, and henceforward looked upon him as her hero in public life. But he needed more solid help than this, and hardly knew where to turn for it. He went to his father's old friend, the Marshal de Broglie, hoping to enlist his sympathy. The old soldier respected the boy for his daring, but felt it his duty to send him away with nothing better than a scolding and a promise not to betray him. He was not friendless however. Two comrades he had, as enthusiastic as himself—his brother-in-law, the Vicomte de Noailles, who always followed his lead and had caught his enthusiasm for Liberty ; and his cousin, the Comte de Ségur. Lafayette arrived one morning at seven, whilst the Count was still in bed. "Wake up!" he cried, "I am going to America to fight for Freedom. Nobody knows as yet, but I love you too much not to tell you." This was the first that de Ségur had heard of it, but he lost not a minute in leaping out of bed and saying he would go too. Young de Noailles had made the same resolution. Negotiations were opened with the American Envoy, Deane. Unfortunately for the chivalrous trio, the Court got wind of their intention ; the King formally forbade them to go.

De Ségur and de Noailles, who had no money, had nothing for it but to acquiesce. Not so the more fortunate Lafayette. Outwardly yielding, but daunted by nothing, he cast about him for fresh ways and means.

Benjamin Franklin was then in Paris, receiving such ovations in his marten-fur cap and fustian suit as the old Spartan had never dreamed of. Parties were given in his honour, at which the most beautiful women were chosen to embrace him in turn, and to place wreaths upon his head. A medal, with his portrait and an Olympian motto, was struck and even shown to the King. No man of quality was complete without a ring or a snuff-box with his medallion. "These," he wrote to his daughter, "have made your father's face as well known as that of the moon, so that he durst not do anything that would oblige him to run away, as his phiz would discover him wherever he should venture to show it."

To him Lafayette appealed, and not in vain. Silas Deane was again consulted. It was arranged that the Marquis should take advantage of a long-standing engagement to go to England with the Prince de Poix, and that on his way back he should meet a certain ship at a Spanish port, and escape to America. Deane would meanwhile write to the authorities there and tell them to give him a military commission directly he arrived.

To London he went, and no one, not even his wife, had a notion of his purpose. Sure now that his great scheme would be fulfilled, he entered into the spirit of his comedy, carried out his *rôle* of chief actor, and enjoyed his sly visit with hilarity usually foreign to him. He laughed in his gold-laced sleeve when he was presented to the King, against whom he was about to take arms; or danced at the house of Lord George Germain, who was Secretary for

the Colonies. He aired his sympathy with the rebels and then breakfasted amicably with Lord Shelburne. At the opera he met General Clinton, whom he was next to encounter at the battle of Monmouth. His impatience at last broke bounds, and after three weeks of frivolity, he went to look after his ship. By this time all his friends were confident that Don Quixote had reformed himself and given up his exploit. They had relaxed guard and were prepared to make settling down pleasant for him. De Ségur and de Noailles alone were in his confidence.

He reached Spain safely, with a fellow-enthusiast, De Kalb. Just as they were about to start, they learned that they were found out. Lord Stormont, the English Ambassador in Paris, had discovered their secret and communicated it to the d'Ayens. The American Envoy was made to write and forbid his country even to give Lafayette employment. Two officers pursued him to Bordeaux with a *lettre de cachet* commanding him to report himself then and there. It was accompanied by letters from his relations "so terrible that they made him fear for his wife's condition." All this correspondence reached him in Spain. His alarm about Adrienne made him give in. He wrote at once to the Minister, Maurepas, explaining his conduct, and set out for Bordeaux, where he duly reported himself. Here, however, he heard that there was no real danger from Government or risk for his wife, and that the *lettre de cachet* had only been sent at the Duc d'Ayen's instigation. He changed his mind at once, pretended to set off for Marseilles, but once well started, disguised himself as a postilion and returned to Bordeaux. Here he lay all one night in a stable on a bundle of straw, and was recognised by the pretty maid at the inn, who

had seen him before. But a sign from him initiated her; silently she became his partisan, and when the officers pursued him afresh, she told them she had seen him go by in a carriage in an opposite direction to that which he had taken. Once more he got off. He wrote to tell Maurepas that he had received no answer, and concluded that silence gave consent; at last he joined his ship and set sail for America, without further mishap.

Ministers, officials, father-in-law, raged in vain. Even the King could do nothing. Nor did the mischief stop with Lafayette; his example fired others who were but awaiting a precedent. Government had only itself to blame. In the May of 1776, it had enthusiastically acknowledged American Independence. From the first this cause attracted all sorts and conditions of men. The very words in which the Declaration was framed were received with acclamation, and the ministers themselves admired its measured tone. Every theoretic young noble beheld in it the fulfilment of his theories and his longing for military action; every adventurer found a vent in it. "The middle classes, the merchants, lawyers, physicians, artists, authors, who saw themselves despised as *roturiers*, their property arbitrarily taken from them, even their public liberty subject to the caprices of a Court, viewed with deep satisfaction a people in revolt against arbitrary power." The American Envoys, who were the lions of the salons, were besieged the whole morning in their rooms by applicants seeking service in the war. Almost all of these were accepted, some at once, some later. De Ségur and De Noailles were amongst them, though they had a hard struggle, and did not gain their point till long after their friend's departure.

Yet the French made a radical mistake in their con-

ception of American Freedom.* The most eager among the men who surrounded Franklin were philosophers and writers. These fervent egoists attributed to their own literary influence the liberal progress in the New World, and modestly aspired to see themselves the legislators of the West as well as of Europe. Plain Boston citizens would have laughed to hear that they were disciples of Rousseau, and they would have been right. There is a gulf fixed between the French and American Revolutions. The former aimed at total regeneration; it was a reaction against despotism; the latter resisted innovation. Like our great Rebellion, it only aimed at rational liberty—at the abolition of abuses, and was a natural development of the American character and constitution. Its philosophy was embodied in Franklin—shrewd, yet child-like, "the picture of republican simplicity"; its action, in George Washington—prompt, practical, single-hearted.

All this especially suited Lafayette. His journey was accomplished without more than the usual dangers, in those days of bad sailing vessels and long voyages. He spent much of his time in writing reams of tender apology to his wife, though he knew that it was unlikely they would reach her. When he arrived, he sent his letter off in three parts, on three separate vessels, to give it three separate chances. We, with our twopenny-halfpenny stamps, cannot picture the postal complications then to be expected from pirates, tempests, and English frigates. Corsairs and enemies alike seem to have been gossips, greedy of other people's correspondence. Occasionally he found somebody returning to France to whom he could entrust his epistles. All the first ones arrived safely, and we may

* See *Life of General Lafayette*, by Bayard Tuckerman.

hope that they helped to console his Adrienne. He had need to excuse himself, for in spite of her sympathy with his projects, he had been obliged to steal away like a thief in the night, without a word of explanation or farewell to her. Had he confided in her, her family would have learned all. How she took it, we can only surmise. We gather that there must have been reproaches, from the frequent entreaties for forgiveness, even in his later letters; but these are generally accompanied by thanks for her satisfying replies. Perhaps she only reproved for the sake of forgiving him; at any rate, there was no break in their union.

He landed in South Carolina. Hardly had he disembarked, when his boat encountered an English vessel and was nearly captured. He went straight to the house of a friendly American major, Von Hüger, who lived near his landing-place; he knocked him up at midnight to ask for entertainment, and it was granted him abundantly. His host charmed him, so did all the people he met, and he was eager to describe them to his wife. In a day or two, he wrote to her:

"The manners of this people are simple, honest, dignified; they belong to a country where every cranny resounds with the lovely name of Liberty. . . . My sympathy with them makes me feel as if I had been here for twenty years. . . . The wish to oblige, the love of country and freedom reign here, together with a sweet equality. . . . All citizens are brothers. . . . There are neither poor people, nor even what are called peasants, in America. Every man seems to have a pleasant competence and enjoys the same rights as the wealthiest proprietor of the country. . . . Although there are immense fortunes here, I defy anybody to find the

slightest difference in the respective manners of richer and poorer to each other. . . . Everything is very like England, excepting that there is more simplicity here than there. . . . The American ladies are very pretty, very simple, and deliciously clean. Cleanliness prevails universally, with the greatest fastidiousness, even more than in England. . . . The inns are very different from those in Europe; the innkeeper and his wife sit down at table with you, do all the honours of a good meal, and when you go, you pay without any bargaining. If you don't want to go to an inn, you find country-houses, where it is enough to be a good American to find a reception such as Europe only gives to a friend. . . . I hope that for my sake you will become a good American. It is a sentiment fit for noble hearts; for the happiness of America is linked to the happiness of mankind. . . .

"People must think I am very happy; but you are not here, dear heart; I miss my friends too. I know no happiness apart from you and them. I ask you if you love me always—I ask myself still oftener the same question, and my heart answers 'yes.'"

"Is it not horrid," he writes later on, "to think that it is publicly, by English newspapers and gazettes from the enemy, that I have tidings of you? A rather futile article about my arrival ends with a paragraph concerning your expectations and your confinement." He longs to hear the news in a surer way. Is it a boy or a girl? Either will rejoice him, but his little Henriette has given him "a taste for girls." Meanwhile, however sad he imagined himself without his wife, as a matter of fact he was perfectly happy. He was in the company of his other lady, Liberty—he was moving amid stirring scenes. After

a few days, he left the Von Hügers and set out on a slow journey through Charleston to Philadelphia; here he hoped to confront Congress and join the Army close by. But Congress received him coldly. It needed no marquises and objected to embryo martyrs; besides, it had already been harassed by too many applications for employment, and did not understand that he wished to serve without pay. He stood up modestly and explained their error; his glowing words were counterbalanced by his cold manner, and the combination served to convince them; they were charmed by his simplicity. Permission was granted him to serve in their Army; in consideration of his rank, they made him a Major-General, though they would not allow him to exercise the duties of his office till they had made further trial of him. He was content to be judged on his merits. Happily, the American Envoys in Paris had been in no hurry to send off the paternal letters forbidding Congress to employ him, and they arrived too late to prevent it.

Lafayette had his altar and his sacred fire all ready; he was only waiting for a hero. That hero was now to appear and to remain on the stage for the rest of his life. George Washington came to Philadelphia, obliged to do so by the arrival of Howe and his fleet. Lafayette was introduced to him. "Although," he wrote, still under the glamour of the first impression, "Washington was surrounded by officers and citizens, he was to be recognised at once by the majesty of his countenance and his figure." Washington took to the new recruit immediately; he liked his modesty and accompanied him to the camp at Annapolis. Here they found the army still raw and undisciplined—a troop of clumsy plough-boys, for whom Washington apologised to the Frenchman. "I am here to learn, not to

teach," Lafayette replied simply, and his answer delighted his General. Soon afterwards the young Major saw action, He fought in the battle of Brandywine, or Chad's Ford, and was wounded. His hurt was long in healing, though not serious, and he assures his wife it is a trifle.

"Here you have the history of what I pompously call my wound," he tells her, "and I only do so to make myself interesting and give myself airs. . . . Be easy about the care that is taken of me. I have a friend who has spoken of me in such a way as to make them attend to me. That friend is General Washington. This noble man, whose gifts and goodness I admire, whom the more I know, the more I revere, wishes to be my intimate friend. His tender interest in me has thoroughly won my heart. I am established in his house; we live like two closely-united brothers, in mutual intimacy and confidence. This friendship has made me as happy as I can be in this country. When he sent me his First Surgeon, he told him to look after me as if I were his son, because he loved me like one. When he heard that I wanted to rejoin the army too early, he wrote me a letter full of tenderness, and implored me to make a good recovery first."

This is only one of many such portraits. We are apt to look upon Washington rather as a National Institution than a man; he has grown to be an abstract of Liberty, or a type, like Moses and Daniel. But his friend makes him a human creature, with a heart that beat quickly enough, as well as a soul that soared high. The Washington that Lafayette shows us is a dignified mixture of courage, sense, honour, and minute kindness. When, nearly fifty years later, Lafayette revisited the white-washed walls of Mount Vernon, it seemed to him a shrine for solitary pilgrimage—a shrine of familiar re-

collections, grave and gay, and the fitting expression of its owner's simple, unchanging character.

Presently we find the two wintering together at Valley Forge, whilst the commander was training his troops in the face of every hardship. There was freezing cold without; stupidity and ignorance within.

Their intercourse was their only distraction. "Washington's confidence in me," wrote Lafayette, "is greater than, in the face of my youth, I dare confess. In his position he is constantly surrounded by flatterers and foes. In me he finds a sure friend, into whose heart he can pour forth his own; who will always tell him the truth. Not a day passes without his having long talks with me, or writing me a long letter, and he likes consulting me on all the most interesting points. And, at this moment, there are special circumstances which make my presence useful to him."

He referred to a conspiracy which now added itself to other evils, and was worse than all the rest. The rascals that plotted against the General fawned for their own purposes upon his boon-companion, but Lafayette outwitted them. These cabals, however, made him keep more closely than ever to his leader's side. The personal need of his presence and the public need of his sword in the American cause were the excuses he urged to his wife, who was evidently hurt that he did not return at this juncture. Perhaps he had held out some promise of his home-coming, but her petition did not really influence him. "Judge for yourself," he cried, talking of his privations, "if I do this for my happiness." Perhaps it needed no great subtlety to discover that this was just what he *was* doing, and she would hardly have been a woman had she been altogether heroic over it. But

she always returned to her sympathy with his aims. She had need of all her courage now, for we next find him writing about the death of his little Henriette. It happened early in 1778.

"The loss of our poor darling is always present to me," he says. "I heard of it directly after getting the news of the Treaty, and whilst my heart was torn with grief, I had to receive and take part in the assurances of public joy." The mother's sorrow is wrapped in silence, more expressive than any words.

Perhaps this letter of his was one of those sent to Paris by the hand of John Adams, the new American Ambassador. Lafayette charged him to see his wife, who was all this time living with her parents. Accordingly, on April 13, 1778, there was this unequivocal entry in Adams's diary:

"This morning the Duchesse d'Ayen and Madame la Marquise de Lafayette came to visit me and inquire after the Marquis."

Personal descriptions and analysis, such as America now delights in, never entered the ken of plain John Adams. But other mentions of the d'Ayens follow.

April 30, Thursday. Dined with the Marshal de Mouchy, with the Duke and Duchess d'Ayen, their daughter the Marquise de Lafayette, and other great company. The Marshal lives in all the splendour and magnificence of a viceroy, which is little inferior to that of a king."

On May 1, he dines with the Duc d'Ayen. "When I began to attempt a little conversation in French, I was very inquisitive concerning the great family of Noailles, and I was told by some of the most intelligent men in France, ecclesiastics as well as others, that there were

no less than six Marshals of France of this family; that they held so many offices under the King, that they received eighteen million livres annually from the Crown; that the family has been remarkable for ages for their harmony with one another and for doing nothing of any consequence without a previous Council and Concert."

In the following year (1779), a sharp attack of fever decided Lafayette to return home. He had shone in military daring and achievement, and had done material service to the cause he championed. Even the Red Indians had not been allowed to slip; he had addressed them eloquently in their native tongue and converted a feathered chief to the love of Liberty. America now looked upon him as her own, and parted from him with demonstrative sorrow, though his return was to be speedy. His journey brought fresh dangers. The ship in which he sailed could not collect a sufficient crew, and filled up the gaps by English prisoners who plotted a general massacre of the officers. Happily it was discovered in time, and the quixotic Marquis at last set foot upon French soil again.

His position in his country was singular. The *lettre de cachet* had never been withdrawn, but his exploits had created a *furore* throughout France. Even the moderate Franklin made a hero of him, and his name was in every mouth. Still, etiquette demanded that his sentence should be carried out. His circumstances presented all the elements of comedy and the possibilities of pathos, so characteristic of French situations. He made for Paris, but on his way passed through Versailles. Here he was formally congratulated, questioned, introduced to the Ministers—and arrested. His prison, however, was only the Hôtel de Noailles, which it was his dearest wish to

reach, and whence he had no wish to emerge. He did not find prison life monotonous. All the ladies of Paris arrived post-haste to embrace him; all the Ministers to consult him. No moment of a hero's company must be lost, even though he was in disgrace. Lafayette wrote a humble letter of apology to the King. Louis summoned him to Versailles, gently reprimanded him, and set him free. Hero worship now followed its will without further trammel. At the theatre, bursts of applause greeted the remotest allusion to his career; a passage in one play described a man who combined the dash of youth with the prudence of age; it was repeatedly clapped and the lines were copied out by the Queen herself, though she did not approve of the American cause.

That cause was never forgotten by Lafayette. Even the joy of re-union with his wife and of her daily companionship did not keep him from working continuously for it. Of his home happiness we have no record; it needs none. Of his schemes for American liberty we have full details. Paul Jones reappears on the French coast with his ship, the *Bonhomme Richard*—Paul Jones, the American corsair, the Robin Hood of the seas, always ready to take arms in the service of freedom, no matter under what flag. Lafayette incites him to invade England in his trusty boat; if that seems impracticable, to compass the attack in conjunction with the Spanish fleet. Paul Jones, however, sails off on other quests, and our hero is left to press young nobles to start for the New World, and to importune Government for supplies. It ends by granting a sum of money, six thousand men, and a gift of clothes for the army.

Even the King was finally obliged to patronize Independence, and, a short time after this, invented a special badge, the Order of Cincinnatus, with which he presented

the Frenchmen who had fought for America. He did it with scant zeal, and probably with no warmer motive than that of pleasing the public, but this only makes his action the more significant.

In 1780, Lafayette set sail for his adopted country again, in company with the Vicomte de Noailles, Messieurs de Luzerne, de Chastellux, de Montesquieu, de Damas, and Duplessis-Mauduit, all names destined to stand out in Revolution days. The war with England was still going on, but there was a momentary respite from action. The young men began the winter light-heartedly enough. M. de Chastellux describes it in his memoirs. He, Lafayette, and the Vicomte have tea with Mrs. Shippen of Philadelphia; a New England *belle* plays the harpsichord; Miss Shippen sings timidly, accompanied on the harp by de Luzerne's secretary. De Noailles, fired by his example, stretches some harp strings on a violin and plays for the young folk to dance; they are all charmed by the frank jollity of the Philadelphian *salon*. The good folk do not shame their Puritan blood, even in their gaieties. Colonel Mitchell, Master of the Ceremonies at a ball, sternly rebukes a young lady who is too much absorbed in conversation to attend to her quadrille: "Take care of what you are doing," he cries, "do you suppose you are here for pleasure?"

Lafayette and his comrades, at any rate, knew that they were not. Events took a more serious aspect, and they rushed to arms. On the one hand, they had to contend with the plot of the deserter, Arnold; on the other, with Cornwallis, who was conducting a disastrous campaign in Virginia. He was at last forced into Yorktown by the skill of Lafayette, to whom the efficiency of the besieging army was also largely due. When the city capitulated,

Cornwallis, like a good soldier, begged Lafayette to visit him; they talked over the campaign in comfortable leisure, and forgot their differences in the excitement of military discussion. The bad news travelled quickly to England; Lord George Germain, who had been entrusted with the conduct of the war, heard it in London; he drove straight to Lord Stormont, the French Ambassador, then to the Chancellor's, whence all three went together to Lord North. Lord George Germain was afterwards asked how the Premier had taken the news: "As he would have taken a ball in the breast," was the reply, "for he opened his arms, exclaiming wildly, as he paced up and down the apartment during a few minutes: 'Oh, God, it is all over!' —words which he repeated many times, under emotions of the greatest agitation and distress."

In 1783, Lafayette went back to France. The enthusiasm for him as conqueror of Cornwallis was greater than ever. Even the Queen, during his absence, had been carried away by it. When he arrived unexpectedly at the Hôtel de Noailles, his wife was away at a Court fête, in honour of the Dauphin's birth. His arrival was suddenly announced at Versailles. Directly the Queen heard of it, she ordered her coach and insisted on driving Madame Lafayette to Paris; her guests were left to take care of themselves. Again we have no record of the meeting with his family—only that of his brilliant triumphs. He is made a Field Marshal, and invited to dine with the superb Maréchal de Richelieu and all the Marshals of France. They drink Washington's health, and compose speeches about Lafayette. The popularity, if not the wine, mounts even to his solid head. "Lafayette *will* think himself the one person necessary!" cries no less a character than John Adams, whose power of admiration had its limits. Madame

Lafayette, for whom he *was* that one person, had doubtless helped him mount on to his pedestal. Absence makes the heart grow fonder, or, at any rate, more excitable. We are told that, at this time, the vehemence of her feeling was so great that, for many months, she used almost to faint whenever he left the room. She soon perceived that if she was not to bore him, she must moderate her transports. She perfected herself in the art of loving. "One would have called her sentiment a passion," wrote her daughter in after years, "if this expression were in tune with the exquisite delicacy which banished every idea of jealousy, or, perhaps, I should say all the evil impulses which usually result from it. Nor was she ever exacting, even for a moment. It was not only that she kept from my father every wish that did not suit him; she really had no bitter thoughts to conceal."

Into this happy family, in the same year, a daughter was born and christened Anastasie. The mother, after her tardy recovery, devoted herself to bringing up her second child, George. Though he was only four years old, she had already tried to inspire him with a love of Christianity, and now she became anxious that he should acquire more worldly knowledge. In spite of his extreme youth, his parents together chose a tutor for him, M. Frestel, destined to win his spurs in dangers as yet far off. The mother, with her aptitude for self-flagellation, was not content with renouncing the care of her boy. She thought that his father's whole course of life would interrupt his education, and determined to remove him from the house. She took lodgings for him and his tutor, and only visited him occasionally. Events were thickening in her family. About this time, her two sisters, Pauline and Rosalie, were married to M. de Montagu and M. de Grammont. The

third sister had been left a widow after a year's union ; but she now married again and found a devoted husband in M. de Thésan. Adrienne herself left the Hôtel de Noailles, and, for the first time, had a town-house of her own in the Rue des Bourbons. But her favourite home was always at Chavaniac, Lafayette's ancestral estate, now inhabited by his old aunt, with whom Adrienne made fast friends. The young couple soon took up their abode with her, and the house renewed its youth in fresh associations.

The indefatigable Lafayette distinguished himself in the provincial Council of Auvergne and found time for manifold activities. He was not content with improving the condition of his peasants and setting his wife to work for them. He wished her to be his helpmate in larger projects. John Adams did not exaggerate. He was here, there and everywhere, wherever reform was needed. One of the objects nearest his heart was the abolition of slavery. He bought a plantation in Cayenne, called *la belle Gabrielle*, in order to show the results of gradual emancipation amongst his negroes. The organization of all the details belonging to such a scheme he entrusted to Adrienne. She had full sympathy with it as a Liberal measure, and enjoyed making little plans of her own for the spiritual education of the blacks. She opened a correspondence with a College of Missionaries at Cayenne, and believed that the whole movement might be brought about through the force of religion. Her hopes were doomed to disappointment ; it was the great Revolution which eventually freed the slaves. But the negroes of La Gabrielle were the only ones who did not join in the enormities perpetrated by their fellows in '92. After all, her labours were not unrewarded.

Her tasks at least served to cheer her during Lafay-

ette's next absence. The Treaty of Paris, by which all Europe acknowledged American Independence, was signed in 1783. North's blunders were over, and Lafayette's sword was no longer needed. But he longed to see Washington again. In 1784, he returned to the West, to receive ovations, and to linger peacefully in the garden and library of Mount Vernon. The next year saw him home again. This time he travelled back by Austria and Germany, and went to pay his respects to Frederick the Great at Potsdam.

"In spite of all I heard of him," he writes to Washington, "I could not help being struck by a costume and figure which suggested an old, decrepit, and dirty corporal, covered with Spanish snuff, his head almost resting on one shoulder, and his fingers distorted by the gout. What surprised me much more was the fire, and sometimes the softness, of the most beautiful eyes that I have ever seen; this softness gives to his face an expression as charming as it can be harsh and ominous—when he is at the head of his army, for instance."

For eight days, he passed more than three hours of every afternoon at the King's dinner-table. The talk was chiefly between Frederick, the Duke of York (his guest), and Lafayette himself. He felt quite at his ease, and seemed to have a knack of drawing out the magnetic personality of his host. In the course of his stay, Cornwallis arrived at Potsdam, and Lafayette sat between him and the Duke at dinner, on the best of terms with both. He did not reach Paris till the late autumn. The question of the slaves began to occupy him again; he was even more taken up with the civil disabilities of Protestants. In spite of Voltaire's chivalry, these unfortunates were still heavily oppressed. They could neither contract a valid marriage, nor make a

valid will; they had no rights as citizens. The fervent young Marquis made surreptitious journeys to the chief seats of their oppression, especially Nismes, that he might investigate matters for himself. He conferred with the Protestant Ministers and brought them home with him. His wife liked nothing better than receiving them. Her large heart had grown still larger under his influence. "Her intelligent zeal for religion made her long that it should commit no more injustice, . . . and she thought it criminal to restrain the liberty God has given to men." Her husband, not content with his efforts, returned from his quests to air the subject at Versailles. In 1787, he brought it before "the Notables", who had been convoked the year before. De Luzerne, the broad-souled Archbishop of Langres, seconded him; but no definite motion was carried, and the abuse, like so many others, remained to be caught up and swept away by the torrent of '89.

France did not eclipse America in Lafayette's mind. Jefferson, whom he knew well, had become American ambassador, and they two together organized the affairs of the Republic. Everything seemed prospering for him at home and abroad. All blessings were his: work, play, reputation, with the august climax of a bust in the Hôtel de Ville. Nothing seemed wanting. Yet Time had other things still in store for him. His century was big with events.

Before the Revolution

CHAPTER III

Before the Revolution

"FED upon the principles of a military monarchy; . . . educated amidst the glamours of the Court; imbued with pious maxims; affected by the licence of a time when *galanterie* figured as a virtue; excited to liberty by philosophical writings and parliamentary speeches; we wished to enjoy in one breath the favours of the Court, the pleasures of the town, the approval of the clergy, the affection of the people, the applause of the philosophers, the renown of *literati*, the favour of ladies, the esteem of virtuous men. So that a young French courtier thought, spoke and acted, in turn, like an Athenian, a Roman, a Parisian, a Paladin, a Crusader, a courtier, a disciple of Plato, Socrates, or Epicurus."

The Comte de Ségur knew his Paris—none better. He said that at this time, 1785–89, it was more like Athens than at any other period. Life was daily becoming more interesting there. Events were thickening, though their real nature was hidden. As yet they seemed only symbols of hope—milestones on the highroad to Utopia. It is true that famine was imminent, in spite of conversation about Corn Laws—that Maurepas and Calonne had failed to fill the empty Treasury. But had not Necker written a pamphlet on finance that must set all difficulties right? There were *Parlements* too at hand, and the Notables were

convened. That was itself a golden mark of progress. And so they talked and hoped on, through fresh *Parlements*, Ministries, and Beds of Justice, till they reached the States-General and the Tennis Court of '89.

It was as a Notable that Lafayette came to town. He was as confident of success as his compeers, and had even refused an invitation to accompany the Empress of Austria on an expedition to the Crimea, so that he might attend the Council. "I fully hope it will end well," he exclaims—"I flatter myself that we shall get a sort of Representative Chamber in every province, not to fix, but to redistribute the taxes."

Meanwhile, he settled with his family in the Rue des Bourbons.

A strange, significant Paris it was that they entered. Had they had eyes to see, they might have read the handwriting on its walls. But they too were sitting at Belshazzar's feast. The Court was in despair, because it could not see its way to reducing its luxuries. They were all essential—the officer who existed to hand the newspaper to His Majesty, and the one who placed the footstool for the Dauphin. There was a weekly dinner at Versailles which cost £1,600; eleven million pounds went yearly upon courtiers, mistresses, and placemen. The Queen, it is true, commanded her ladies to dress in black; she did so herself, and gave up powdering her hair; but this was from æsthetic instincts, not from economy. Classical simplicity was coming into vogue; it was part of the rising enthusiasm for the Roman Republic and everything concerning it. David was at work in his atelier. He had just completed his great picture, "The Sons of Brutus," for the annual exhibition at the Louvre. The authorities remonstrated; they tried to exclude it; but they were overruled.

The public hailed it as a masterpiece of republican painting. On the stage, the same subject was represented; it produced the same effect. Lafayette went with the Duchess of Orleans to see "Brutus" acted. A Radical speech drew forth such applause from the democratic *claque* in the *parterre*, that for fifteen minutes nothing could be heard. When the noise subsided, they insisted on bringing Voltaire's bust on to the boards and crowning it with flowers. Marie-Joseph Chénier's tragedy, *Charles IX.*, had already made a revolution in the ideas of the *Français*. St. Bartholomew's Eve was not a theme that allowed of traditional compliments to King and custom. It did something more practical, and completed Lafayette's labours for the Protestants. Almost at the same moment, Lemercier published his book recalling the drama to reality, both in subject and in language. It was famous then, it is forgotten now; but it showed how the land lay, and made a fresh reform in the theatre.

Excitement was in the air, and took every shape. Gambling became almost an epidemic, and spread amongst all classes. The Palais Royal was the centre of high play. There were private resorts also, harder for the police to reach; grand ladies gave their drawing-rooms, and ventured larger sums than the men. They made peril graceful, and attracted statesmen as well as dandies. Pétion was amongst the keenest gamblers, and Barnave lost £1,200 in one night. They were to risk still higher stakes when they played for the cause of the Gironde. Duels and brawls abounded; the law was evaded and was no longer enforced. A certain Chevalier had himself carried to the gaming-table in his last agony, and died with his fingers on the green baize.

If heroes behaved thus, it was natural that their valets

should follow suit. All the footmen of quality gathered at "Chocolat's," an ex-tailor turned chocolate-maker. Even the market-place was not exempt. In Les Halles, the fishwomen sat in rows, bare-legged, powdered, and painted to their eyes, in imitation of the great ladies. In the intervals of bartering, they played at loto in profound silence. To them it seemed the business of life. They heard of a gentleman who was about to travel round the world, and shrugged their shoulders. "*Il faut que celui-là n'ait rien à faire*," they said ; then they resumed their loto. Their concentration was ominous ; so was their silence. It was soon to be broken by the sound of their drums, as they beat them through the streets of Paris and cried for the blood of the King. The Court was not unknown to them. Had it not been their duty, from time immemorial, to go there in congratulatory procession on the Queen's birthday, and to present her with a bouquet at the Dauphin's christening ? Later, they found enough to do in keeping their own festivals.

Meanwhile, if play ran high, words ran higher. Paris became more than ever a city of talk ; there was no sign of wholesome indifference anywhere. Men's minds were on the alert at every point, and their tongues never seemed to rest.

When Arthur Young travelled back to Paris at the beginning of 1789, one great change struck him in the country people. He had last seen them dumb and dejected, with eyes bent on the ground. Now they stood about in eager groups, conversing and gesticulating. There was every symptom of approaching fever. Newspapers were multiplied and placarded gaily on the walls ; the hawkers cried their names in shrill tones through the squares. Clubs had increased rapidly, and daily became

more political. Charm was for once at a discount. There were no women to throw a glamour over the rising irritation of party-spirit, either in the club-rooms, or in the masculine *salons*, which now became fashionable. Even the Abbé Morellet banished ladies from his "Sundays"; and weighty work was done in the drawing-room of Adrien Duport, where Mirabeau talked with Roederer, and the atheist Dupont aired his favourite theories.

But if men were proving that they could do without women, it did not follow that women could do without men. No force can keep them out of male affairs, and, with the genius of their sex, they adapted themselves to new conditions. Unfortunately, they did not choose to mediate, but preferred to scheme. The fascination of argument overtook them. "The hostess of to-day," writes a contemporary lady, "is a Penthesilea, who sits at a tea-table trembling with rage; in the midst of violent debates she burns her fingers, and spills a cup of tea over her dress."

"I can't endure these ideas—they have spoiled my Paris for me!" cried a sociable nobleman; and the Comte de Ségur tells the same story. "I find Society more forcible, more animated, and wittier than ever," he writes. "It would be difficult to find either languor or tediousness anywhere. Yet it has lost its most amiable attraction for me; it no longer possesses the gentleness and urbanity which so long made it the best school for grace and good taste. Political passions have stolen into our drawing-rooms, and have almost transformed them into arenas, where the most opposite opinions jostle one another. There is no more discussion, only dispute . . . everybody talks loudly, and nobody listens; temper prevails in every tone, every countenance. . . . People of dif-

ferent parties break up into separate groups ; even those who agree debate in shrill tones. As for women," he sighs, "nothing is so unbecoming to them as political passions. Ill-humour dishevels them, and anger makes them ugly."

Madame de Staël was the Colonel of all these Amazons —the origin of the modern platform-lady. She was brought up in the salon of her mother, Madame Necker, which was kept free from political discussion. When still quite a girl, the daughter managed to lure her parents'-guests into her private boudoir, where she argued bril liantly with them on all subjects. *She* called her room "*Mes Délices*"; *they* termed it "the Ardent Chamber." When she married the Swedish Ambassador, she plunged into polemics and kept a firm finger in every State-pie. If one sincerely feels oneself sublime it is difficult to avoid seeming ridiculous. Madame de Staël always thought of herself as a sort of feminine Brutus standing on the steps of the Capitol, and declaimed in this character, both in company and alone. Statesmen consulted her about the affairs of the kingdom ; when she did not know a thing, she made a practice of pretending that she did, and thus obtained the information she desired. As she brought a warm heart to bear on her unpractical politics, she soon grew into a public mischief-maker. Matters were complicated by her genius. Her friends adored her ; plain business men disliked her.

She had a cordial detractor in one such politician, who was an important element in the Society of the moment. This was Gouverneur Morris, afterwards American Ambassador, now in Paris for commercial purposes. His sturdy figure was seen everywhere in all the dignity of sober pride ; his keen eye observed everything. He was busy, curious, and indefatigable in all things concerning social

improvement, but Art and Romance were dead to him. His common sense amounted to the gift of prophecy. No one foresaw so clearly the course of events in France, or gave a sounder account of what he saw and heard. It was the more piquant, because he hid his Puritan features behind an Epicurean mask. Parisians were never really congenial to him, excepting those who were least like Frenchmen. The Lafayettes were his first and best friends. He liked them as much as he distrusted Madame de Staël. They knew her also, as did all the d'Ayens. It was at the house of their aunt, Madame de Tessé, that she told him he had "a very imposing air," and accompanied her compliment by "a look which, without being what Sir John Falstaff calls 'a leer of invitation,' amounts to the same thing." Presently, as he remains chilly, she encourages him by insinuating that she rather invites than repels those who are inclined to be attentive, and that perhaps he might become an admirer. Morris replies that, as a previous condition, she must agree not to repel him, and she promises in good faith. She flattered the ambition of the mediocre Sieyes, by telling him that he was to politics what Newton was to science. Still more active was she in pursuit of Mirabeau. Madame de Tessé —her only mate in mental energy—had an open quarrel with her, in which the stalwart de Tessé expressed her disapproval of him. "The ladies became animated to the utmost bounds of politeness," says Morris, who was, as usual, present.

According to him, these new-fashioned political women not only disfigured themselves, but neglected their households. He arrives, by appointment, to dine with an intellectual Countess, and finds "in the drawing-room some dirty linen and no fire. While a waiting-woman

takes away one, a valet lights up the other. Three small sticks in a deep bed of ashes give no great expectation of heat. By the smoke, however, all doubts are removed respecting the existence of fire." Madame does not appear till close on five, when, in company of some hungry writers, they sit down to dinner. It is scanty, and cooked with rancid butter. Each guest is "employed either in saying a good thing, or in studying one to say; it is no wonder if he cannot find time to applaud that of his neighbour. They all agree that we live in an age alike deficient in justice and in taste. Each finds in the fate of his own works numerous instances to justify this censure. . . . In pitying modern degeneracy we rise from the table."

This is only one corner of the picture. Charm does not quite desert her birthplace, even when the women of Paris make a pleasure of business rather than a business of pleasure. Their sofas were hidden by piled-up pamphlets; they turned their drawing-rooms into bureaux; but those bureaux were still brilliant, and the sofas luxurious.

Madame de Staël, their indefatigable pioneer, said that she had never before found Society so attractive. The union of lightness and gravity charmed her, and she asked nothing better than to be the Muse of Conspiracy. She was not without rivals. Chief amongst them was Joséphine de Beauharnais, afterwards Napoleon's wife, who "had a graceful little talent, and knew how to listen." Her blue and silver *salon* was called "The Egg of the National Assembly." Here the old world met the new: Playwright Crébillon and Wit Collé greeted the Abbé Barthélmy and M. Bailly, and Liberty and Equality were said to preside. The widow of Helvétius was another important hostess of the rising generation. Franklin took

snuff at her table, whilst the pessimist Chamfort indulged in revolutionary aphorisms, and the scheming Sieyes hid his political intrigue beneath his pretty speeches.

More alluring were the philosophic gatherings of Madame de Condorcet, large of mind, gentle of heart, and subtle of pen, who was said to have married her husband out of pique in 1787, and to have fallen in love with him in 1789, when public events revealed his true nature to her and she saw him transfigured by enthusiasm for humanity. Or there was Olympe de Gouges, who could neither read nor write, but, fired by patriotism, composed and dictated a tragedy a day. The flight to Varennes turned her from a Royalist into a centre of the Opposition; but, disgusted by the condemnation of the King, she ended by dying for him. "Since women have the right to mount the scaffold," she said, "they also have the right to mount the tribune."

The Radicals were not only found amongst politicians; the younger poets and artists joined their ranks. Their chief meeting place was the histrionic gallery in Talma's Hôtel, which was hung with old suits of armour and romantic weapons. There his wife, Julie, welcomed Greuze with his long curls; Chénier, lyrist and tragedian; the stage-reforming Lemercier; and Roland, still a bachelor, with a sharp eye for affairs. Or else they collected at the supper table of Sophie Arnould, the actress of the Revolution, famed for her bad food and good company. "In fact," said one of her guests, "if one did not devour one's neighbour with one's bread there, one would die of hunger."

Then there were Madame de Genlis' receptions in her apartment in the Palais Royal—literally a glass house, for it was lined with mirrors; here she threw her stones and

looked at her elegant reflection every evening. But her boudoir was only the antechamber to the greater *salon* belonging to her royal mistress, the Duchesse de Chartres and her master, the Duke, afterwards Philippe Egalité. Every shade of "Red" went to their parties, and in this they were not exceptional. The whole theory of the Revolution began with the aristocrats, though they left action, as usual, to the populace. It was behind their masters' chairs that servants first heard the praises of Fraternity; and servants resisted it longest: it offended their decorous instincts. A certain coachman blocked a street with his carriage for an hour, because, having last served a prince, he was not accustomed to yield precedence to any other driver. The countess inside the coach persuaded him, for once, to put away etiquette and go on. This same coachman afterwards became a Jacobin *député* and one of the Public Accusers. The whirligig of time brought him to stranger places than his lady's coach-box; by then, he had found out the advantages of a levelling doctrine.

But "Equality" does not only benefit plebeians. If it removed burdens from the peasants and gave rights to the citizens, it also made for the interest of the nobles. It exempted them from *lettres de cachet* and the Bastille, and diminished the power of the Court, which stood quite as much in their way as the power of the people. It was no wonder that, apart from its intellectual attractions, they adopted it as a precept, so long as practice was far off. A *soirée*, according to the Ancien Régime, was hardly to be found in 1788, unless it was at Madame de Champonas', where, "with diabolical sallies," the Vicomte de Mirabeau, Rivarol, and the Comte de Tilly composed "the Last Will and Testament of French conversation." Most of the aristocratic salons welcomed the Opposition

with acclamation, but they kept their fine manners, and here alone the leisurely graces of the Court were found united to modern activity.

The Lafayettes themselves were of this high-born circle, and moved chiefly within it. They knew and entertained every sort of Liberal, but it was here that they chose their intimates. All sorts of names, known and unknown, meet our eye. The eldest was Madame d'Angiviller, the former hostess of the Economists, as hospitable as ever to the latest idea, though she had begun life at the Pompadours' Court, and was now faded and bedizened. There was also the Duke of Bedford, most Jacobin of Englishmen, who had taken a sumptuous Hôtel near the Louvre. All Paris fought for invitations to his balls, where the variety of his roses was only matched by that of his guests. Beggars and highwaymen would have been as little of a surprise as Sultans and Nawabs.

These were the orgies of Liberalism. Madame de Simiane gave it calmer entertainment. She was almost socialistic. Her zeal for politics was rather mixed up with her zeal for Lafayette. With her, alone of all women, he appears to have had an approach at flirtation—a high-souled flirtation, it is true, full of republican aspirations and universal aims, but still an exciting relationship. We cannot help surmising that his tender letters to a nameless lady, during the early days of the Revolution, were addressed to her. Adrienne made friends with her also; perhaps this was the occasion of her victory over the green-eyed monster, mentioned by her daughter. Anyhow, Madame de Simiane joined the Lafayettes during the emigration, and lived with them for a time. But we do not need this evidence to know that Lafayette's wife had nothing ignoble to complain of.

The most extreme among these high-born hostesses were Mesdames Coigny, Murinet, Bergelini, and Vauban, who was called "the ugly demagogue." "Ah!" exclaimed one of their guests, "they are as plebeian as an antechamber!" and their mixed company justified the epigram. Then there were the Princess Hohenzollern, who received most of the *gauche*, and Madame de Broglie, a friend of Barnave's, and the de Lameth brothers, whose buoyant intellects revived the dullest company. The name of the Baronne d'Escars is great in social reputation, and kept it, even in the emigration, when she held a *salon* at Aix-la-Chapelle. As for the de Lavals, the de Gouvernets, the d'Astorgs, their hospitality was to cost them dear. All these political ladies were nursing adders on their gilded hearths. The Revolution especially delighted in punishing the Liberal aristocrats.

No picture of them would be complete without Madame de Tessé. Her house was one of the most political. We have overheard her quarrelling with the Muse over Mirabeau; but she out-Staëled De Staël, and made herself ill over public affairs. She had none of her rival's egoism, and her vanities were never successful. "For twenty years," says a periodical of the day, "she has busied herself with the Constitution; she has foreseen everything that happens; she would give the last drop of her blood for her 'scheme' to be carried out. Her body is weak, her heart affected, her nerves wretched. Her soul cures everything, and suffices for everything." She came to regard the Constitution as her own child; at home she dandled it before her guests; abroad, in the corridors of the Tuileries, we see her making energetic curtseys to Mayor Bailly, and congratulating him upon its growth.

She flung her doors open to the rising generation, and was never so happy as when providing dinner for them.

It was at one of these meals that Lafayette found himself next to Morris. Madame de Tessé liked Morris as a friend, but thought his politics too half-hearted. So did Lafayette. "You are always quoted as against the good party," he said to him on this occasion. Morris replied that he only opposed the democrats out of regard to liberty. Lafayette made a remarkable reply: "I am aware that my party is mad, but I am none the less determined to die for them." It was freedom, not the freebooters, in which he was interested, and freedom remained to win.

Morris could make no such fine distinctions. Little did he reck of the Jacobins yet to come. He thought the present Liberal party very extravagant, and rated Lafayette for his opinions. "It is not by sounding words that revolutions are produced," he said to him. He disapproved of the orthodox Conservative, quite as much as of the Radical. A certain aristocrat questions him about America, "in a manner which shows he cares little for the information." Morris wishes to impress him with the difficulty of invading America. "It would be hard, sir," he explained, "to subdue a nation, every man of which feels himself a king. If you looked down on him, he would say, 'I am a man; are you anything more?'"

Monsieur: All this is very well, but there must be a difference of ranks; and I should say to one of these people: "You, sir, who are equal to a king, make me a pair of shoes."

Morris: Our citizens, sir, have a manner of thinking peculiar to themselves. The shoemaker would reply: "Sir, I am very glad to have the opportunity of making

you a pair of shoes. It is my duty to make shoes, and I love to do my duty. Does your king do his?"

Morris and Lafayette represent, indeed, two parties with the subtlest shade between them. The New Englander demanded justice of the King, but desired to have one on the throne; constitutional monarchy was his ideal. Lafayette, for the present, accepted this form of government, but it did not represent his standard. Nothing was essential to him excepting liberty, and where liberty led, he would follow, whether it was over a throne or under it. He wished his country to possess a parliamentary system like that of England. Morris, on the contrary, declared that France needed a more highly-strung government. But their differences did not affect Morris' admiration of Lafayette's military genius, or the warmth of their friendship. The Ambassador soon became the familiar of their household, and took part in all its homely events: the doings of the children, or the arrival of the finely-cured hams which Mrs. Washington sent to Madame Lafayette —a housewifely postscript to her husband's letters. The Lafayettes invited all the Americans they knew to eat the first one. Morris probably had his share, for he often dined with his friends.

"After dinner," he writes one day in his diary, "one of M. de Lafayette's little daughters sang a song for me. It happened to be one of my own composition. Madame is a very agreeable, good woman." This simple entry gives us a pleasant idea of their relations—of the mingled delicacy, familiarity, and compliment which intimacy did not impair.

It was not usual for ladies to dine out. Madame stayed at home, but her husband was invited everywhere. We find him accompanying Madame de Lauzun and Madame

de Staël to St. Ouen, the Neckers' country place. After dinner, he and M. Necker set to work on "a little reform in criminal jurisprudence intended to warm up the Keeper of the Seals." Madame de Staël encouraged and admired him. She was now a full-fledged Republican. Firm views well suited a lady who might actually have been Mrs. Pitt, had not her parents failed in their plans; she disliked England too much to fall in with them, and then M. de Staël appeared on the scene. Pitt seems like a man of ice as he flashes in and out of the warm Parisian life. He reappeared there during the year 1787, when he made acquaintance with Lafayette.

"My dinner yesterday was a great success," writes the latter. "M. Pitt was supported by five Englishmen, and there were a dozen rebels, counting the ladies. After having *politicked* a little, M. Pitt started for London and left me delighted with his wit, modesty, nobility and character—a character as interesting as the part for which fate destines him. The attack upon him in Parliament prevents his stopping longer in Paris, and he pretends that, as long as England remains a monarchy, he cannot hope to see me in London. In spite of this sarcasm, I have a great wish to go there one day; I shall pay my respects to the King; I shall save my soul through the Opposition. Since we gained the day, I confess I shall have the greatest pleasure in seeing the English. But my conversion is not complete. Without being fatuous enough to treat them as personal enemies, I cannot forget that they are enemies of the glory and welfare of France. I am quite prepared to astonish the public by my patriotism as much as I am supposed to have done by my sensibility."

With Talleyrand, Lafayette had more frequent relations.

It was Morris who invited them to meet each other at dinner. He himself had first become acquainted with that Mephistopheles of Abbés at the house of his mistress, Madame Flahaut. She had already been the *confidante* of Montesquiou; later she wrote romances, now she showed a fine head for public business. Her exclusive dinner-table was devoted to Talleyrand, and she became a *chef* of stratagem. State secrets and weighty schemes were swallowed at her banquets with the soup; and freedom, like her sauces, was used as a means, not an end. Morris grew intimate with her, and perhaps this fact helped him to dislike Talleyrand. "He appears to me a sly, cool, cunning, ambitious and malicious man," he wrote; "there is something of the author about him. But a tender attachment to our literary productions is by no means suitable to a Minister. To sacrifice great objects for the sake of small ones is an inverse ratio of moral proportion. . . . I know not why conclusions so disadvantageous to him are formed in my mind; but so it is, and I cannot help it." Lafayette equally disliked the diplomatic priest. Talleyrand did not dislike—he only despised; and the enthusiastic Marquis annoyed him. Still *trop de zèle* had to be reckoned with in public affairs, and events were rapidly bringing Lafayette to the fore.

Things were going from bad to worse. The treasury was as empty as ever. Loménie de Brienne, with his scheme for equal taxation, had replaced Necker, and turned out more futile than his predecessors. Further taxation was impossible. The towns had grown insolent; the country people were more seriously disaffected. Lafayette declared that in his own province of Auvergne the poverty-stricken peasants were leaving their ploughs, and workmen their shops—that the only chance for most

diligent citizens lay in begging or starving. Many thousands fled yearly across the frontier; marriages became of rare occurrence and population steadily decreased. The Notables had not fulfilled their promise. A wit who knew English had called them the "Not-ables" and the name had stuck to them. They had, it is true, exposed Calonne, instituted provincial assemblies and abolished the Corvée, or labour tax, together with the restrictions on the corn trade. But, on the whole, they were little more than a bureau for advice. They had proved to be what they were—a mere council of nobles, far less radical than the *salons*. They could be liberal enough in theory, but when it came to taking measures, they knew their proper limitations. Lafayette was too consistent for them—perhaps also too crude, for his methods were often wholesale. From the first, they had tried to keep him out, but in vain. "The Pit is unanimously in my favour—the boxes are divided," he wrote to Washington, and the boxes found him as disturbing as they expected.

He was supported by de Ségur, the Lameths, and his two brothers-in-law, de Noailles and de Grammont. Impatient of shilly-shally, he drew up a formal protest, destined for the King. It inveighed against the extravagances of the Court and the misery these meant for the peasants; it proposed to abolish useless expenses; it ended by demanding the States-General or Parliament of the Three Estates—an institution unheard of for one hundred and seventy-three years. His suggestion did not make him more popular with Queen and courtiers, though the King remained friendly to him; but it went beyond Versailles and sank into the heart of the people. Lafayette's hand had sown the dragon's teeth—the seed of the Convention.

Meanwhile, poor Louis blundered on, and sent his edicts, as usual, to be registered by the *Parlement* of Paris. Anxious to curry favour with the popular party and to escape fresh burdens, the *Parlement* boldly resisted a new tax on land. The King took advantage of his ancient prerogative, and passed it in a Bed of Justice. The *Parlement* refused to regard this proceeding as valid, and a hubbub ensued. Something had to be done, and done at once. The only question was who was to do it.

In our Revolution, the able men of either side were opposed from the first. Falkland, Hyde, and Clarendon never wished to work with Hampden, Pym, and Hazelrigg. In France, it was different. At the dawn of the Revolution, the distinguished men of all professions took counsel together. Kings-men and Republicans alike believed in reform; the difference was only in the bounds they set to it. Mirabeau, Lafayette, and Montmorin (the friend of Louis and Minister for Foreign Affairs) laboured side by side; the wise busybody, Morris was never far out of reach; Sieyes, Jacobin from the first, helped in engineering; and Talleyrand was always within earshot, when it suited his purposes to assist them. These men were the sponsors of the new order, still innocent in its cradle. The nation had taken up Lafayette's cry, and clamoured for the States-General; they cheered on the nation; the King went on refusing. At last, like Pharaoh, he gave a tardy consent. Preparation was made for its assembly—the Passover of French history. After it came the Exodus: the Exodus of a whole world.

The Revolution

CHAPTER IV

The Revolution

I

IT was in May, 1789, that Nobles, Clergy, and Commons filed in solemn procession to the Church of Saint Louis at Versailles, there to pray together for God's blessing on their work. Lafayette walked in their midst; Talleyrand and the Bishops were there in golden vestments; Mirabeau towered amongst the *Tiers État*; there, too, stepped the philanthropic Dr. Guillotin, who had just completed his report on the Penal Code and his invention for mitigating the horrors of capital punishment. He had done signal service to humanity; any Parliament might be proud to reckon him amongst its members. From church they went straight to the famous *Salle des Menus*, soon to be the stage of the greatest of modern dramas. Gouverneur Morris was not the man to waste such an opportunity. He was there, listening and observing. There is a letter to his wife, written a few days later, when the whole scene still belonged to the present; it gives an account so fresh and so vital that we cannot resist reproducing the whole of it.

"I had the honour," he says, "to be present on the fifth of this month at the opening of the States-General—a spectacle more solemn to the mind than gaudy to the eye. And yet, there was displayed everything of noble and of royal in this titled country. A great number of fine women, and a very great number of fine dresses ranged round the hall. On a kind of stage, the throne;

on the left of the King, and a little below him, the Queen; a little behind him to the right, and on chairs, the Princes of the blood; on the right and left, at some distance from the throne, the various princesses, with the gentlemen and ladies of their retinue. Advanced on the stage, to the left of the throne, the Keeper of the Seals. Several officers of the household, richly caparisoned, strewed about in different places. Behind the throne, a cluster of guards, of the largest size, dressed in ancient costumes, taken from the times of chivalry. In front of the throne on the right, below the stage, the Ministers of State, with a large table before them. On the opposite side of the hall, some benches, on which sat the Marshals of France, and other great officers. In front of the Ministers, on benches facing the opposite side of the hall, sat the Representatives of the Clergy, being priests of all colours, scarlet, crimson, black, white, and gray, to the number of three hundred. In front of the Marshals of France, on benches facing the Clergy, sat an equal number of Representatives of the Nobility, dressed in a robe of black, waistcoats of cloth of gold, and over their shoulders, so as to hang forward to their waists, a kind of lappels, about a quarter of a yard wide at top, and wider at bottom, made of cloth of gold. On benches, which reached quite across the hall, and facing the stage, sat the Representatives of the people clothed in black. In the space between the Clergy and Nobles, directly in front of the Representatives of the People, and facing the throne, stood the heralds-at-arms, with their staves, and in very rich dresses.

"When the King entered, he was saluted with a shout of applause. Some time after he had taken his seat, he put on a round beaver, ornamented with white plumes, the part in front turned up, with a large diamond button

in the centre. He read his speech well, and was interrupted at a part which affected his audience, by a loud shout of '*Vive le Roi!*' After this had subsided, he finished his speech, and received again an animated acclamation of applause. He then took off his hat, and after a while put it on again, at which the Nobles also put on their hats, which resembled the King's, excepting the button. The effect of this display of plumage was fine.

"The Keeper of the Seals then performed his genuflexions to the throne, and mumbled out, in a very ungraceful manner, a speech of considerable length, which nobody pretends to judge of, because nobody heard it. He was succeeded by M. Necker, who soon handed his speech to his clerk, being unable to go through with it. The clerk delivered it much better than the Minister, and that is no great praise. It was three hours long, contained many excellent things, but too much of compliment, too much of repetition, and indeed too much of everything, for it was too long by two hours, and yet fell short in some capital points of great expectation. He received, however, very repeated plaudits from the audience, some of which were merited, but more were certainly paid to his character than to his composition. M. Necker's long speech now comes to a close, and the King rises to depart. The hall resounds with a long, loud '*Vive le Roi!*' He passes the Queen, who rises to follow him. At this moment, some one, imbued with the milk of human kindness, originates a faint '*Vive la Reine!*' She makes a humble courtesy and presents the sinking of the high Austrian spirit; a livelier acclamation in return, and to this her lowlier bending, which is succeeded by a shout of loud applause. Here drops the curtain on the first great act of this drama, in which Bourbon gives freedom.

His courtiers seem to feel, what he seems to be insensible of, the pang of greatness going off."

The Third Estate had a sprinkling of *curés* and men of letters, but consisted chiefly of lawyers. They had arrived in Paris from all parts, without any concerted scheme, or knowledge of each other. But all were alike concentrated on Reform. The Court showed them no conciliatory attentions, and they met in a stormy temper, hardly knowing what they should first demand. Their caprice weakened their force at the outset; at one moment they hold their breath before Mirabeau's eloquence; "at another, they hiss, though not very loudly." Morris dines with them at a restaurant; one man is violent against the nobles; another against his own order. An old man refuses to dress in the costume prescribed for the *Tiers*, and appears in his farmer's habit; he is received with long and loud plaudits. Perhaps their heads were slightly turned, for they were much in fashion. "What is this *Tiers*?" writes a belle to her beau—"I have not forgotten the pamphlet you recommended. This morning whilst I was dressing, one of my maids read me part of it"; and again, after a few days' interval: "Do you know that since you became a member of the *Tiers* I have stopped scolding the servants?"

The ideas of the Third Estate grew gradually calmer, though it lacked a leading spirit. Lafayette had been eager that he and some of his compeers should be elected as commoners. But though the *noblesse* disliked his presence amongst them, they were obliged to resist such an infringement of tradition. He had to content himself with forming an opposition in his own ranks, and rallying de Beauharnais, de Noailles, the Duc d'Aiguillon and the de Lameths round his standard. When the *Tiers*

stood out upon the manner of their voting, he found himself in the distracting predicament of being obliged to vote with his party against his principles. The result must have done much to console him. There is no need to recapitulate the King's tottering obstinacies, the famous session of the *Tiers*, their locking of the doors, their final victory. These events have become epochs, and the world is familiar with them.

On the 17th of June, Mirabeau gave the council its name. He, Sieyes, and Lafayette had anxiously discussed its right title. "The deputies of the different orders are deputies at one and the same assembly—the National Assembly," Mirabeau said, in a speech made on that day; and the National Assembly it became. Three days later, it met in the Tennis Court at Versailles, elected Bailly as its president, and swore not to disband till it had made the Constitution. It summoned the clergy to join it—only three of them obeyed. The King had been still wavering and trying to resist it; on the 25th of June he gave in, and commanded the nobles to unite with it. Lafayette lost no time in drawing up a Declaration of Rights, on which the later one was based. It was much like our own Petition of Rights, and only demanded such elementary reforms as protection against abuses, and equality of taxation. To the English of that day it must have seemed a list of truisms; to the French it was a revelation. They made Lafayette Vice-president of the National Assembly. This was early in July; on the 11th of that month, Necker and the Ministry were dismissed.

"*Ça ira*," Franklin was wont to reply, when young France importuned him with inquiries after the American war. His phrase became a watchword of freedom in Paris, and now the Revolution took it up and marched to

its music. Lafayette and Morris had as yet only "considered of a revolt in Paris," and agreed that "it might occasion much mischief, but could not produce any good." Everything that had hitherto occurred had, in their opinion, merely represented lawful reform. They, or, at any rate, the acute Morris, soon suffered disillusion. On the day of Necker's disgrace, there were serious riots. The streets were unsafe. Morris was dining at the American Embassy, where he met both the Lafayettes, who were as calm and optimistic as ever. But the King and Queen, he reports, "were confoundedly frightened." On returning to his own house, Morris received a visit from an Abbé, who had boldly sallied forth in a *fiacre* to observe the insurgents; he was so frightened that he fled to his friend's rooms, where he was joined by another scared cleric. Morris was constrained to see them safe home, and their terror on the way "was truly diverting"; they mistook the ordinary passengers in the Rue St. Honoré for a mob, and were deposited trembling on their doorsteps. Their escort, on his way back, was in time to watch a fight on the Place Louis XV.; the military were obliged to fire. Next day, July the 12th, came news that the prison of La Force had been opened—that all the grain had been stolen from St. Lazare. The town jokes became ominous; carts were sent to market, each containing a fat friar. Tradesmen collected weapons. Morris did not think it safe to walk out without the green oak-bough of the *Tiers* in his hat. July the 13th slips by without his knowing what is happening. On the 14th, he writes in his diary:

"While sitting here, a person comes and announces the taking of the Bastille. . . . Yesterday it was the fashion at Versailles not to believe that there were any disturbances in Paris."

There was nothing for the moment there but merry-making. The city and Lafayette were still under the impression that there was no Revolution ; that the thunder of cannon was but a military salute on their arrival in Utopia ; and the storming of the Bastille a feat of heroism, rather mismanaged. The *Garde Française* deserved without question to be canonized, especially he who had forced the gate of the prison by hanging on to it and allowing his legs to be pulled like ropes till it yielded. These were the same soldiers who, a few days before, had refused to mount guard in the rain. The Nation was evidently educating itself ; what might it not yet do ?

Lafayette sent the key of the Bastille to Washington. Its ruins became the fashionable promenade, and gallants took their ladies there to pick up the stones and try how far they could throw them ; they cried "*Liberté* !" as they did so. These same stones were collected by active-minded shopmen, and there was a regular dépôt for them in the Palais Royal. They were sold at a high price as relics, or made up into still costlier brooches, one of which, set in laurels, was worn by Madame de Genlis.

" The Storming of the Bastille," was posted in large letters on the street placards, and acted at Ruggieri's theatre with realistic effects. Then the tricolour began to appear ; first it was only seen in cockades for the hat or the hair ; presently it was worn everywhere. Clothes became a significant uniform. The revolutionary ladies put on long coats of red, white and blue, with little shoes, three-cornered hats and even pocket-handkerchiefs to match. The aristocrats took advantage of the Empress of Austria's death to dress in black, with black cockades, white cravats, and buttons engraved with the Fleur-de-lys, and continued thus, in tacit opposition to Jacobin colours.

The moderate Republicans were clad in black, with scarlet waistcoats. There was so much to say just then that the economical French nation did not care to waste words in declaring its parties ; it enabled men to tell them at a glance.

The prescient Morris had already suggested that the *Garde Française* should be turned into a city regiment. It was found necessary to re-organize the civic forces without delay. On July the 15th, the monarch, still dazed by the din of the Bastille, sent eighty members of the Assembly, Lafayette amongst them, to Paris, with a message of goodwill. They were received by an ovation, and borne through " a sea of tricolour cockades " to the Hôtel de Ville. Here, amidst tumultuous plaudits, arose the question of organizing the municipal troops. Who was to be their leader? The Liberal, Moreau de St. Méry, threw a significant glance at the bust of Lafayette, which stood near—a monument of his youthful feats for freedom. In a moment the crowd took fire, proclaimed him commander-in-chief, and not content with one inauguration, went still farther, and made Bailly Mayor of Paris. The two heroes were marched off by the mob in compulsory jubilation to Notre Dame, where the Te Deum was sung in their honour, amidst huzzas and cannon-shots. It is true that the King attempted a vacillating opposition to Lafayette's appointment, but it sank bewildered before the energy of the populace, and the Assembly easily consoled its monarch by voting for the erection of his statue.

Lafayette had accepted the office without hesitation. The position he was to fill combined opportunities for military heroism, with the furtherance of his abstract schemes. There was no lack of volunteers. The National Guard, like the *Tiers*, or the fragments of the Bastille, became a popular idol. Women professed indifference for all those who

had not joined it, and men of every class flocked to enrol themselves. *Cordons-bleus* left their spoons and saucepans for swords and helmets. We hear of a music-master of sedentary habits, whose pupil, a lady of the old *noblesse*, fainted on suddenly seeing him in martial costume. At first, the soldiers had uniforms of all sorts and colours; afterwards they wore blue, and were known as "Lafayette's cornflowers"; they had tricolour cockades and waving plumes, and the officers were distinguished by gold epaulettes.

Gouverneur Morris rejoiced at Lafayette's commandership. He warmly approved of him as a soldier; he warmly disapproved of him as a statesman. It was not only on account of his opinions. Both he and Talleyrand agreed that Lafayette was weak and vague as a politician, because, in spite of his clear principles, he had no definite scheme for the moment. Even his conception of a commonwealth was confused by his demand for an hereditary executive. His plans were too large and intellectual to be of practical use. Intent upon the justice of his aims, he could not see that France was not yet fit for so much liberty as he prescribed. "He is too republican for the genius of his country,"—so said Morris, who begged him to resign his seat in the Assembly and devote himself to a military career. This was far from Lafayette's thoughts; the making of the Constitution was a matter of religion to him; all his castles in Spain and elsewhere were at stake, and he clung to his parliamentary career. Besides (although he hardly knew this), it afforded him the amplest field for his ruling appetite—the love of popularity. His "need of pleasing" and of universal applause is the feeblest, and, perhaps, the most lovable point in his character. His vanity always sprang from the heart, and that important organ was never turned, whatever happened to

his head. There is something innocent in his enjoyment of political glory; as a soldier, he had long ago gained all that could be had. It was doubtless his prestige as a hero, joined to his strong will, that blinded men to his incompetency, and rapidly made him a leader where he should have been a learner. He soon acquired influence in the Assembly, where stormy scenes were being enacted.

Everything was expected of it. A peasant was asked what he wanted it to grant him. "The suppression of pigeons, rabbits, and monks," he replied. These were his grievances, and his fellows had similar lists. The Assembly would certainly consider them. Its early days were its best. "As for me," writes de Ségur, "I shall never forget the impression produced on my mind by the vehemence of Mirabeau's speeches; the pomp and harmony of the Abbé Maury's; the brilliant improvising subtleties of the Abbé de Montesquiou; the deep, luminous dialectics of Dupont; the cold, severe reasoning of Malouet; the lucid reports of Thouret."

Add to these names those of Bailly, Matthieu de Montmorency, La Rochefoucauld, Liancourt, du Châtelet, Montlosier, Boisgelin, Boissy d'Anglas, Maubourg, Custine, d'Aguesseau, de Noailles, de Luzerne, de Broglie, de Beauharnais, the Chevalier de Boufflers, and the Marquis de Talleyrand, and the wonder is that the "*Constituante*" did not do more. A contemporary said that, in spite of its failings, it formed the basis of all modern government, yet its failings often impeded its immediate usefulness. Its dignity varied with its mood; it always spoke in heroics, but the scale of its topics varied surprisingly.

On August the 4th, it almost attained sublimity. One young noble after another rose from his seat to renounce his privileges for Fraternity's sake. The Vicomte de Noailles

ascended the "Tribune," amidst deafening applause, and proposed doing away with all feudal rights, tithes and taxes. The motion was carried with enthusiasm, in spite of Sieyes' calm demonstration that to abolish the land-tax was to make a gift to the landowner. There was generally some point in the debates at which reason failed: often they descended to puerile turbulence and useless interruptions that had little to do with the making of a constitution. Once all the members, great and small, spent a day in discussing the removal of such statues as represented aristocratic persons and might cast a reflection upon liberty; one of them got up and proposed the destruction of every monument, every mark, of nobility, including titles. His audience consented with joy, more especially Lafayette, who thenceforward rejected his aristocratic "de," and never resumed it. Crests were erased from carriages, mottoes discarded. The Liberals grew grandiloquent in sacrificing the graces of life. They were more impressive when they considered its utilities.

Necker's last financial scheme (completed just before his disgrace) afforded matter for Mirabeau's eloquence. His long speech upon it is a masterpiece of irony; it seems written in bronze, and Necker's ideas were crushed beneath it. First, with veiled sarcasm, he proposed trying the project without alteration, or further discussion of it. The glory would be Necker's, so would the responsibility; if it proved a failure, they must appeal to the nation. Then the orator threw off his mask and rejected the whole plan with open scorn. So spontaneous is the outburst that we can hardly believe, what people said then, that it was all a plot with Talleyrand, who wanted Necker's place. The indefatigable Abbé was, indeed, always manœuvring. Rather later we find him proposing to go to England, to turn out

Pitt, and to make an English alliance which would counterbalance the Royal Alliance with Austria.

There was nowhere a lack of intrigue. The names that are most spoken of at a great political epoch are not generally those of the finest men. It is the most active, not the most thoughtful, who are then conspicuous and who seem important, though they may not really be so. Thus mediocre and restless spirits—schemers and agitators—often acquire a contemporary reputation which dies away when the true proportions of history are revealed. Such were the ambitious Sieyes, and Brissot, the controversial journalist. Miners and underminers, they seemed at one moment to be managing the Revolution, though in reality they were no more than its edged tools. They spread their webs for every fly. Condorcet, large and theoretic, was instantly caught; so was Lafayette. These four met at Condorcet's house, and, for a while, made a kind of diminutive Cabinet. But their bond was fictitious: real sympathy between them was wanting. Sieyes started a plot to put Philippe Egalité at the head of the Assembly; Lafayette and Condorcet separated from him. The former remained on friendly terms with him, but there was no further intimacy between them.

The Royalists were no less busy than their opponents. Favras hatched a forlorn conspiracy which ended in his arrest and execution. His death was unjustly laid at the door of Lafayette—a fact which did not diminish the hatred of the Court party for him. Jefferson declared that between Lafayette's abstract politics and his concrete foes, France was not safe for him.

II

Outside Paris, there was great confusion. Every village was trembling with "the great fear," or dread of the mys-

terious brigands who were expected to descend from the mountains with fire and sword. The Assembly could pass no measure against bogies. It had enough to do without plots and panics; and September found it trying, amid much excitement, to decide whether the King should have the Absolute or only the Suspensive Veto in legislation. Lafayette, too, had his hands full, and needed no extra work. As early as July, he had discovered that there were stumbling blocks in Utopia. The massacre of Foulon, then that of Berthier, on the 6th of that month, had compelled him to resign his commandership—resumed at the supplication of the people. After that, it seemed as if matters would settle down peacefully; but disturbances increased in a manner very puzzling to theorists. He had to double his patrols and restrain the Press; no hawkers were allowed to cry their papers in the street, unless they wore a leaden badge of their legitimacy. And now the question of the Veto was agitating the mob afresh. Mirabeau was Lafayette's rival in popularity; they crowded round him, one day, as he came out of a bookseller's, and implored him to command acceptance of the *véto suspensif*. If that were granted, there would be bread. Lafayette did not wish to give them stones; but again he increased the patrols.

Then came the King's fateful importation of the Flanders regiment; the dinner given to it by the royal body-guard in the Opera House at Versailles; the Queen's appearance in the Hall; the chivalrous orchestra's "Richard, oh, mon Roi," as a fitting salute to her; the hoisting of the white cockades with an almost old-world arrogance; the umbrage taken by the tricolours; the return feast given by the Flemish soldiers; the second banquet of the Guards—and all this whilst Paris citizens were starving, waiting all day before the bakers' shops, to

trudge home as empty as they came. When they thought of Versailles, their patience was at an end.

October had come; its fifth morning had dawned—that morning whose tocsin sounds on in the pages of Carlyle. Under his guidance, we can still watch the ten thousand starving women, as they gather in the twilight streets; we can follow them to the Hôtel de Ville, where the Guard, without its Lafayette, admits them; and on to Versailles, led by "shifty Usher Maillard," with "Demoiselle Théroigne" seated on the cannon in their midst. We can enter the National Assembly with their deputation, and look on at the obedient despatch of Mounier, Dr. Guillotin, and others, with a petition for food to the King; or we can behold the crowd of Mænads surging outside the *Salle des Menus*. At last, tired of waiting, it rushes in and only waits for the disappearance of the Members to invade their seats and hold a mock parliament of its own. A final flash shows us the return of the emissaries with the petition granted; the carts laden with food that arrive from the Palace; the voracious banquet of the mob, more jovial, if also more fierce, than any royal dinner.

Meanwhile, Lafayette had sent despatches to warn the Court. He was not to be let off with mere pen-work. In the forenoon, a detachment of the National Guards arrived to explain their conduct to him. They could not, they said, use force towards "*de bonnes patriotes*"—he must not expect it. They confidingly begged him to depose the King, to set the Dauphin in his place, and to force the Court to come and live in Paris. He must start with them at once, follow the women, and bring all this about. Argument and persuasion fell on empty ears. He was still resisting them when the Municipality sent orders to him to depart. He saw that the only way of ruling Paris,

at this moment, was to obey it, and he bade his men follow him to Versailles. He was more than ever a hero of chivalry when he leaped on his white horse—that curvetting steed which became inseparable from him, and converted him into a premature monument in a public square. Gallantly he rode it, and gallantly his men marched behind him. They did not arrive at Versailles till eight in the evening, when the Mænads had become quiet. He placed his soldiers about the palace ; his Central Grenadiers in the guard-house. He himself went to keep vigil in the Noailles Hôtel close by, where, towards morning, he snatched some rest on a bed.

Again we may look with the Seer's eyes and witness what happened—the King's body-guard, in the grey of the morning, insulting the mob outside ; the sentimental rush of the Republican grenadiers to rescue the courtly body-guard ; the royal panic ; and, finally, Lafayette's appearance. It had a marvellous effect on the populace. Perhaps he reached the zenith of his fame when he brought the Queen out on to the palace balcony and kissed her hand before the crowd. The stiff old peers, even the royal aunts, were compelled to admit that "Ce Lafayette," whom they warmly disliked, had saved their honour, and perhaps their lives. "*Ces indignes Français !*" cried the outraged Queen. "*Dites plutôt indignés, Madame,*" was the reply of Madame Adelaïde. They were glad of their protector's escort back to Paris, for to Paris they were obliged to go. The Assembly refused to be parted from its sovereign ; eighteen members occupied one of his carriages ; the rest took other means to find their way to town. The whole procession from Versailles—royalty, *députés*, dishevelled women, national guards, Lafayette and his prancing steed—only reached the city when it was nearly

midnight. The Court went to the Tuileries; and here, too, in the *Salle de Manège*, the Assembly took up its quarters.

Once more, all things seemed propitious; the King was content with the *véto suspensif* and granted all petitions with amenity. The council could devote itself afresh to the fashioning of a Constitution. But again, its futilities maimed it. It had not enough strength to maintain unity, and split into factions. The plot of Sieyes to make Philippe Egalité parliamentary President, had been taken up by the de Lameths; they wanted to go farther than Lafayette, who had no wish to stir from his classical Republic. One evening, we find him dining with Alexandre de Lameth at Duras' restaurant; they argue loudly about English methods of government, but are on their old friendly terms. A few days later, they are bitter enemies in the Assembly, and have formed hostile groups. The *Fayettistes* represented the Moderate, the *Laméthiques*, the Extreme party.

This would not have been so important, had not the mighty Mirabeau temporarily joined Lameth—at least so far as the Orleans conspiracy was concerned. The tactics of that Titan of romance remain a constant problem. Where romance ended and self-interest began, it is hard to discover. From May till the end of October, he was a democrat amongst democrats; after that he proclaimed the necessity of restoring an Executive, and supported the Court. It paid all his debts and allowed him a high pension. His momentary partizanship with de Lameth defined his difference with Lafayette; but the real reason of that difference lay far deeper—in the mysteries of human nature. It is almost tragic that the two men, who together might have controlled the revolution, should have

been antipathetic one to another. Mirabeau despised Lafayette's respectability; he found his good manners tedious, and his politics conventional. Lafayette disliked Mirabeau's irregularity; he distrusted his former vices and, later, his conversion to the Court. They arranged to meet early in October, and, for the sake of France, try to come to some understanding; but it was in vain. In the course of their interview and discussion of affairs, Mirabeau suggested that they should attempt speedier and more violent measures. Lafayette coldly replied that these could not be used by an honest man. "*Un honnête homme!*" exclaimed Mirabeau. "*Ah, M. Lafayette, je vois bien que vous voulez être un Cromwell-Grandison; vous verrez où vous menera ce mélange-là.*" He had the power of putting his finger on a man's weak point and preserving it in an epigram: Cromwell-Grandison is a name that would have injured any man less popular than Lafayette. Antipathy quickly grew to something like hatred on Mirabeau's part—perhaps it was not unmixed with jealousy of a rival influence. At any rate, he was reported to be plotting against Lafayette's life. Morris warned the latter of the danger and implored him to have no dealings with his enemy. Lafayette's conduct was characteristic. At another and equally futile meeting with Mirabeau, he told him plainly of these rumours. "*Comment, bonhomme, vous croyez ces choses-là?*" was the answer — "*Vous voulez jouer un rôle dans une révolution.*" Mirabeau had not the gift of detecting the good in a man as well as his foibles. Lafayette never acted a part, even when on his white horse. Sincerity was the keynote of his character. *He* was able to judge his foe equably, even in the face of a royal pension.

"Mirabeau was not inaccessible to money," he wrote

after the latter's death in 1791, "but for no sum would he have sustained an opinion destructive to Liberty, or dishonourable to his mind." Morris is more severe in his summary of the man, and perhaps he was nearer the truth: "Venal he was, and shameless, yet greatly virtuous when pushed by a prevailing impulse; but never truly virtuous, because never under the steady control of reason, or the firm authority of principle."

Morris was using his own reason to the best advantage. During 1789 and 1790, the Constitution grew with more or less speed. Everybody had a hand in it, and the broth was well-nigh spoiled by the multitude of cooks. Sometimes it boiled over; sometimes it was encumbered with too many ingredients. Every man of weight—and some who had none—drew up "memorials" or schemes of government, and sent them to the King. Now it is Montmorin who states his ideas; now it is Morris. We meet him at Madame Flahaut's toilet-table, where he is planning out a ministry with her, while her dentist is in attendance. After disposing of the notabilities, Madame turns to Morris: "Well, my friend," she says, "in the end, you and I shall govern France; it will be an odd combination, but the kingdom is actually in much worse hands than ours." They ended by concocting a "scheme" together, which contained sound counsel and was full of uncommon sense. When it was finished, they despatched it to the King and, had he acted on it, he would have been a wiser man. But when he had read it, he put it away; like their proposed Cabinet, it ended in smoke.

It seemed more hopeful when Lafayette discussed the formation of a ministry. A "little committee" was held in the Lafayettes' drawing-room. Adrienne presided. Morris and Clermont-Tonnerre were there; so was M.

de Staël, without the Light that usually eclipsed him. They all begged Lafayette to make a government. He wished to take a Minister from each party and create an "All-the-talents Cabinet." Morris assured him this was unpractical. "Well then," said the sanguine Marquis, "we must give each of the incapable Ministers a clerk who understands affairs." Morris only laughed. "We can't have clerks in a cabinet-council," he replied. Several names were suggested; Lafayette objected to some on the score of their morals. Again Morris shook his head. "Pray consider that men do not enter an administration on the direct road to heaven," he observed, and this ministry in the air fell to pieces.

The Lafayettes' house had become a great social centre. Every Liberal who entered Paris—any man with an ideal, from any country—found hospitality there. It is amusing to find Morris (now American Ambassador) complaining that there were too many people, and that he did not receive enough attention. He had left off going to them; perhaps he found the company too extreme. The hostess must often have done so. She was never nobler than now, when she welcomed so many who offended her fine instincts and family traditions. She tried to forget the Liberals for the sake of Liberty, and revealed nothing but her graciousness. Only once did she demur, and then her principles were concerned. It was in 1790, after the constitutional priests had sworn allegiance to the Nation; Lafayette invited the new Archbishop of Paris to dinner, and she took the marked step of dining out, at a friend's, on that afternoon. This was because he came professionally, as a pastor. When these Republican clergymen arrived as guests, she treated them with her wonted courtesy, and even discussed religious matters and their ecclesiastical

position with them. She recognised that many of them were noble, conscientious men, and appreciated their point of view, even while she held her own and firmly defended the old order of bishops.

Her tolerance seems the more remarkable, when we find that her partizanship was strong enough to spur her not only to speech, but to action. A certain prelate, Bonal, who had refused to take the oath, was making every effort to prevent a rupture between the Assembly and the Holy See; and the d'Ayen ladies soon found themselves the centre of negotiations. He sent his letters to the Pope, under cover to the Duchess, who, in her turn, gave them to her more influential daughter, Adrienne, that she might contrive their despatch to Rome. Replies to them were conveyed by the same road, and it was long before these faithful women realized that the clerical difficulty could not be settled in this way.

In truth, it had become a burning question. It was just before this, in the earlier part of the year, that France had achieved its Feast of Pikes in the Champ de Mars. Deputies from every province had assembled there to swear fealty to the Constitution upon the altar of the Fatherland, which towered over the city, a hundred feet high, as befitted the monument of Liberty. Here the oath was uttered by three hundred thousand voices. Lafayette led them, his hand on his heart. The King and Queen were the last to swear; and here, when they had done, Talleyrand celebrated the first Constitutional Mass. Paris was overflowing, and its houses vied with one another in receiving the provincials. The Lafayettes entertained no less than two hundred of them at their table; the conversation was brilliant and Madame charming. Lafayette walked in and out among his guests, tall and commanding,

still awkward, but never clumsy. His awkwardness had a certain dignity of its own, now that it was joined to knowledge of the world and a genial bearing. In his eyes there was always the look of expectancy which charmed all who saw him.

Nothing had yet happened to embitter him. The Revolution had been rash, even violent on occasion; but until now, it had remained generous. Civic sentiment was lavish. Not content with possessing a National Guard, it felt bound to support that and other patriotic objects by a national cash-box. Peter the Hermit himself could not have desired more bountiful gifts than poured into this impromptu treasury. Ladies sent their jewels, public-spirited infants their toys. One little girl precociously sacrificed her best locket; and a boy of twelve, the forty-eight francs he had long saved to buy a watch with. As we sow, so do we reap. These were the children who were being educated on "*Le bon Citoyen ou le petit Emilien*," and "*The Civic Catechism*," works which instructed them as to their rights, their taxes, and the whole duty of man, in clear language, adapted to four-year-old minds. "*Le petit Emilien*" did his best to add a dash of amusement; he ended by dying patriotically in his crib. "My only grief is to leave mamma, and not to be of use to the Republic," were his last words. "The Fairchild Family," converted to politics, could not have spoken more beautifully.

As for the less noble insurgents—the popular agitators who began to be called Jacobins (distinct from the Jacobins of the more dignified Club)—they were no more seriously considered than our Hyde Park Socialists.[1]

[1] The Jacobin Club, which came into existence soon after the King's arrival in Paris (October, 1789), was, for a long time, a grave and orderly assembly, attended every night by a fashionable audience.

They would never become a party; their bloodthirsty talk was all noise, and their reasoning unsound. But, unfortunately, they gathered crowds round them. De Ségur, walking in the streets, saw a knot of people collected about such an orator, and stopped to listen.

"Messieurs!" screams the orator, "we are starving for bread, and here is the reason. Three days ago, the King got this *véto suspensif*, and already the aristocrats have purchased '*suspensions*' and sent grain out of the kingdom." "*Ma foi, il a raison! Ce n'est que ça,*" replies the mob to this profoundly sensible speech.

Or it is pretty Madame Lebrun, tripping to her studio, who overhears the following altercation between two workmen:

A (a Jacobin)—"Would you like to earn ten francs? Come with us. You will only have to shout, 'Down with this or that one.'"

B (cautiously)—"But shall we get no blows ourselves?"

A—"The devil take you! We shall be the ones to give them."

No wonder that all sensible folk despised such parrots.

Still, they managed to get hold of the provincial deputies, and to fill their heads with dangerous ideas. However contemptible they might be, their number swelled and their audiences increased. It is generally in the beasts of the field that we first see symptoms of the coming storm.

Madame de Genlis frequently took the Orleans children there, as a lesson in reasoning; Lord Sheffield and his daughters heard a debate on their way through Paris in 1791; belles went to the club as to a theatre, and so did any foreigner of distinction who happened to be staying in the town.

The Eve of the Terror

CHAPTER V

The Eve of the Terror

EXCEPTING as host and hostess, Lafayette and his wife had now little opportunity of meeting. His duties left him no time for home life. It was happy that she had adopted his cause, not only because it was his and he had converted her to it. It represented her ideal also, and his career was to her the triumphal procession of her own faith in good. She was ever a priestess, and sacrificed his safety, besides his companionship, on her altar. She never saw him go out without a presentiment that he would not return. The streets were getting more dangerous day by day, and the position of popular idol was less secure than any other.

Sacrifice was not her only form of activity for the sake of liberty. Outside her home ties, her life was full of work. Some time before the Revolution, she and her sister Pauline had together visited the prisons, a deed of daring in those days; and besides this, she was always ministering to the poor, who came daily in and out of her house. The loss of her sister, Madame de Thésan, in 1788, made such occupation more congenial than ever to her. But after her husband became commander of the National Guard, she grew anxious for patriotic tasks. Each of the sixty districts of Paris begged her in turn to make a *quête*, or public collection, for them, at national festivals. She never refused, and we see her at the "Con-

secration of the Flag," and the like ceremonies, walking through the mob, bag in hand, asking for alms. Yet, unlike her husband, she was not blinded by the splendid rise of the Revolution comet. As events progressed, she beheld the faults and dangers of the movement with a vision the clearer for her prayers to reach the truth. "She saw my father," wrote their daughter, "at the head of a revolt of which it was impossible to foresee the end; each disorder was judged by her without the faintest illusion, yet she was always supported by his principles and convinced of the good he could do and the evil he could avert." In her mother and elder sister, she found full sympathy with her feelings about Lafayette. Both of them had firmly kept their aristocratic opinions, though the Duchess rejoiced at the abolition of her privileges as a deliverance from responsibility. They hated the democratic movement, and the chaos of passions that it meant; but both of them, especially Madame d'Ayen, so loved the man that they could appreciate his conduct.

One tradition of high birth was left in Adrienne's mind. We have seen that she could not endure the new order of constitutional priests, although she recognised the virtue in many of them. Some were, indeed, saintly in their lives. The Abbé Fauchet, afterwards misled by enthusiasm for humanity, had begun by stern efforts after primitive Christianity. There were others as good as he. The intention and first result of the constitutional oath was to produce a reform in the Church. Elegant Abbés, accustomed to lounge in perfumed boudoirs, were counselled, at the risk of their fortunes, to put on woollen *soutanes* and to learn the Catechism, of which they did not know a word. On the other hand, the monks, who had no luxury to lose, could only rejoice in the change. Monasteries

were abolished as unworthy anachronisms; the friars flocked to the barbers and hid their tonsures under powdered bagwigs; or to the tailors, where they bought handsome suits. One emancipated Capucin appeared at the play in his cloistral dress, with an uncloistral beard, and received prolonged applause. The caricatures of the day are a journal in themselves. One represents the radical Abbé Maury picking up the Pope's spectacles and restoring the fragments to him; another, a fat monk, entering a hairdresser's shop and exclaiming—"I am to be shaved this morning; I am to be married this evening!"

This aspect of events, and a horror of the secular spirit entering the sacred precincts, filled Adrienne's soul with dismay. But her courage was high. In 1790, just before the Feast of Pikes, when priests were becoming unpopular, she and the Duchesse d'Ayen took her daughter to her first Communion. And when unpopularity became actual danger, her actions grew more marked. She felt that her position as the wife of a leading Republican, demanded some exhibition of her devotion to the Church. She took care to be present, as were all the chief aristocrats, in her parish Church of Saint Sulpice, when the Curé refused to take the civic oath from its pulpit. She assiduously frequented the churches and oratories in which the persecuted clergy took refuge, and, like many of her old friends, made her house into a sanctuary for them, where she helped them to hold their services in peace. Here, too, she received the homeless nuns, who soon followed the monks, though, unlike these, they loudly bewailed their compulsory emancipation.

By so doing, she was not only risking personal safety, but, what was far dearer to her, Lafayette's popularity. It was perhaps the highest sacrifice a loving character could

achieve, for she knew that, for the sake of principle, she might be injuring his career, at a critical moment in his life. It would have been still harder for her, had he not supported her views, but he had always been keen to remove from the "Constitutional Act" the clauses which related to the new organization of the Church. Liberty of worship for all creeds, ancient or modern, was his constant aim, and his wife rejoiced that she gave him frequent opportunities of proving this in the service of non-juring Catholicism. Both tried alike to inspire the constitutional bishops with a spirit of conciliation towards their predecessors, and he, at any rate, imagined that he succeeded.

"I am in despair that you will get no letter to-day," he wrote to his nameless lady, "but when one has become the Public Protector of all religions upon earth, and also has to reckon with the fervour of one's whole family, besides the 'ifs' and 'buts' of administrative bodies and ecclesiastical committees, one gets home later than one expected. For the last two days, I have spent my life in discussions and arrangements concerning the full and immediate exercise of religious freedom. It is strange enough that both the democratic and the moderate *dévots* are contented; even the Curé of St. Sulpice seems reconciled. The real aristocrats are in a bad temper, because the cause of religion is now separated from their party. The ecclesiastical committee spoke to me to-day about taking precautions against these '*réfractaires*.' I told them that the National Guard was a first-rate instrument, and would play all the tunes one wanted, provided nobody changed its sounding-board—the 'Declaration of Rights.'"

As the democratic faction increased, tolerance became more difficult. Between 1790 and 1791, the number and importance of the Jacobins had swelled with startling

rapidity. They no longer figured as mere popular mouthpieces, but formed a political power that had to be reckoned with. Lafayette they distrusted from the first, as being too moderate. They soon discovered that he was a drag upon their breakneck course, and grew to dislike him even more than did the Royalists. Besides, he had sent their moving spirit, Philippe Egalité, to London, on some evidently forced pretext, just when he was becoming useful. The American hero's services were forgotten. He and his National Guard were no longer made much of. Perhaps " The Cornflowers " were conscious of it ; anyhow, they were not so alert in putting down disturbances as at first. A political lady gave them the name of " The Rainbow," because they always appeared when the storm was well over. The storm never *was* over for more than a day or so. Every disagreement in the streets now grew to a revolt, and the temper in clubs and drawing-rooms was quite as quarrelsome. Duels increased at an absurd rate ; everybody was called out for everything. The adversaries often hardly knew what had brought them to the field. In one of these encounters, at the end of 1790, De Castries, a Constitutional Monarchist and a friend of Lafayette's, wounded Charles de Lameth. De Castries' house was attacked and sacked, and Lafayette only just succeeded in preventing its being burned to the ground. In spite of his efforts, he was blamed by the Court, and the sacking was laid at his door. Every day brought him fresh proof that he was between two stools of a sadly explosive nature, a position which did not admit of his resting for a moment.

Both sides were busy. In 1791, the mob stormed the empty fortress of Vincennes ; a detachment of the National Guard, under Brewer Santerre, was sent to the rescue,

but the rascally leader went over to the foe. Lafayette hastened to the scene, and quelled the riot with a flash of his old splendour. That same day, events had been stirring at the Palace. A group of gentlemen, secretly armed, were living near it to protect the King, and whilst the cannon boomed at Vincennes they blundered into a quarrel with the Patriot Guard at the Tuileries. In their excitement, they revealed their hidden weapons; they were disarmed; and the affair would have ended there, had not their opponents magnified it into a plot. Henceforward the King's friends were known as the *Chevaliers au Poignard*, and the Jacobins grew daily more clamorous in declaring that Lafayette favoured them.

The course of events did not help him. The King was bent on receiving the Sacrament at Easter from a non-juring priest, and on retiring to St. Cloud for that purpose. His unconstitutional chaplain there was already making the people furious. In vain did he keep his project dark; when he was on the point of starting, he found his coach surrounded by an angry crowd, who would not let him stir. Lafayette summoned his Guard, and arrived, white horse and all; he pranced and expostulated without effect. His soldiers actually disobeyed him, and refused to dispel the populace. He had to retire defeated, and let his crestfallen Majesty return to the Tuileries. A great deal of bombast ensued. The Commander resigned his commandership; the Guard arrived to protest. Lafayette, unable to face his men, went away from the house and left his wife to cope with them. Adrienne, delighted at his resignation and the peace it meant for her, came down from her room to receive the Municipality and the sixty suppliant battalions. She addressed each one of them with dignity and precision, careful, in her speech to observe

every shade of designation, from that of the "*Chef du Bataillon*" to that of the incendiary, Santerre. They retreated in despair, and her triumph was complete. Not for long, however. Municipal courage took only four days to revive. After that period had elapsed, they waited on Lafayette again; he appeared "without his blue uniform, in civic pepper-and-salt frock . . . the National Guards kneeling to him and declaring that it is not sycophancy; that they are free men kneeling here to the Statue of Liberty." They promised to renew their oath of allegiance to the law. On this, their General relented and resumed his military functions, together with his former post as hero. Nothing was settled then without dramatic swearing, and—what was more fatal—an oath, once taken, was looked upon as an action accomplished. Even Lafayette felt satisfied by these regimental vows, and returned to work, full of hope again.

The King's mood was less happy; he complained to the Assembly about St. Cloud, but he complained in vain. Mirabeau was dead, and the voice of Robespierre already prevailed. Day by day, the Revolutionaries became more powerful in the *Constituante*. Three parties now disputed the floor there: the extreme *gauche* or Jacobin opposition; the Court party; and the Feuillans, or Liberal-Conservatives. The Girondin party was as yet hardly formed, but was soon to detach itself and make a fourth group. Parliament was not the only machinery of Government. Outside it were other agencies, some dead, some alive. There were the ghosts of ministries still moving automatically; there were ever-increasing clubs, vital with the energy of youth. That of the Jacobins, especially, was galvanizing public opinion, and pulling the wires of the Assembly. From such tribunals, the royal

tenants of the Tuileries could not hope for much indulgence, nor did they take the right road to gain it.

On the night of June the 20th, came the tragic flight to Varennes. That evening Lafayette had gone, as usual, to attend the *Couchée* of the King. On coming out, as his carriage rolled through the inner arch of the Carrousel, "a lady in a gipsy hat" stepped aside into its shadow to let it pass; "she had even the whim to touch a spoke of it with her *badine*," or fashionable cane; it was the Queen herself. Further on, he passed close to the famous glass *Berline*, with Count Fersen on its box, and was seen by little Madame Royale, as she sat there watching for her mother. The Commander retired to bed, satisfied that all was as usual. He slept till six, when a thundering at the door awoke him. It was a Patriot deputy with a note. Lafayette accompanied him to the palace: the great birds had flown. He was summoned before the Assembly and examined; Paris even threatened him with pikes. But his classical attitude once more saved him; he *was* the part he played, and his artistic audience was overcome by the Roman effect. Whilst they awaited the return of Royalty, the word "Republican" was for the first time placarded on the city walls; it was the name of a forthcoming periodical, but its title was repudiated as too half-hearted.

There was confusion everywhere. "This unhappy country," as Morris had already written, "bewildered in the pursuit of metaphysical whimsies, presents to our view a mighty ruin. . . . The sovereign humbled to the level of a beggar, without pity, without resources, without authority, without a friend: the Assembly at once a master and a slave, new in power, wild in theory, raw in practice."

The people again petitioned Lafayette to depose Louis

XVI., and again he compromised. Nothing could be more trying than the position in which he now found himself. He was a fervent Republican, according to his own acceptance of the term. To him, it meant a hater of violence and an advocate of absolute parliamentary control. So long as this condition was respected, he could put up with a nominal king, especially when he considered the crucial state of affairs.

Events had tempered his absolutism, and the Jacobin excesses made him begin to think that some form of monarchy might be expedient.

"You know," he writes to his wife, "that my heart would have been wholly Republican, if my reason had not given me this tinge of Royalism; if my faith to my vows and the will of the Nation had not made me a defender of the constitutional rights of the King."

This sums up all the bitterness of his situation. As the English Parliamentarians of 1649 to Cromwell and his Independents, as the Liberal-Unionist to the Home Ruler, so was he to the Jacobins, and they regarded him as a traitor to liberty. Their abuse only made him hold the more lovingly to his principles. Never, said his wife, did she so much admire him as at this crisis. On the one hand, he renounced his Republican prejudices for unity's sake, and voted with the Jacobin majority in the hope that he might thus control it; on the other, he undertook all responsibility and faced certain blame, that he might ensure the safety of the royal family and spare them every possible pain. His wife made a point of going to the Tuileries directly the Queen received; she was the only lady present who belonged to the Patriotic party. Like her husband, she believed that at such a juncture, personal relations should not be controlled by politics. But other

people had no such delicacy, and, at the last Royal Ball, the two de Lameths refused to dance with Marie Antoinette. Lafayette felt every discourtesy as a blot on the honour of his party, and did his best to atone. He went to and fro between Palace and Assembly, trying to negotiate between sovereign and people, seconded by the revolutionary Barnave, who had fallen captive to the Queen's charms. But Lafayette began to feel depressed about his cause. No doubt his wife's family were heartbroken at the misfortunes of the Bourbons; so was his anonymous friend. "I can't tell you how deeply your letter afflicts me," he writes to her. "A revolution invoked by my prayers, partly produced by my efforts, and supported with all my strength, makes every one I love unhappy. I have devoted myself to it to my last breath; but the charm it possessed for me is poisoned by the effect which it has on the objects dearest to my heart."

Meanwhile, the over-social Revolution was eager to give another entertainment; it found occasions to hand. There was a general desire to dethrone "*Gros Louis.*" Why not draw up a monster Petition to that effect and place it on the Altar of the Fatherland in the Champ de Mars? No sooner said than done. July 17 was the date fixed. All was proceeding in due order, when a disabled soldier and his comrade were found hidden below the altar with their luncheon. Surely they were aristocrats in disguise, with gunpowder to blow up the whole of Patriotism! They must be destroyed. Fighting ensued; the tumult grew worse, and Lafayette was at last obliged to hoist the Red Flag on the Hôtel de Ville. Then he and Mayor Bailly rode forth into the Champ de Mars, and Bailly read the Riot Act with no effect. The Commander ordered his Guard to fire—in the air. The scuffle became a battle.

The Military fired again, this time in earnest. The mob, threatening Lafayette's life, at last dispersed, vowing they would assassinate his wife. She sat at home within hearing of the storm, and trembled for her husband's safety. Her children were with her, pale with panic. One of them described in after years with what joyous calm she rose and made all needful preparations when she saw the brigand army approaching her house and knew they had left the Champ de Mars and Lafayette. They were actually scaling the garden wall and on the point of entering the front door, when a regiment of Cavalry, riding by chance across the Square, attacked and disbanded them. But their memories were retentive, and they nursed a fresh grudge against Lafayette for his part in the affair.

Fatigue was beginning to tell on him. The best blood was leaving the country. Ever since '89, emigration had begun, and now a cloud of emigrants was hovering over the frontier. They were speedily finding support and becoming a serious danger. The Sovereigns of Austria and Prussia met the Comte d'Artois, the King's brother, and General Bouillé, at Pilnitz, in Prussia, and there effected a Coalition in the August of 1791. The nation was in danger—let the Patriots look to it!

But it had other things to think of—feastings and rejoicings; for in September, the Constitution was finished. What is more, on the 21st, it was sworn to by the King, or rather "the Executive Power," as he was henceforth to be called. He and his family were no longer prisoners; there was a general amnesty; all was peace and hope. Morris said that if the new Constitution was to succeed, God would have to create a new race of men to live under it. But for Paris in general the Millennium had come. The

Assemblée Constituante had done its work; it came to an end amidst loud plaudits, and the *Législatif* reigned in its stead. The work of Lafayette was also over—or he thought so. He was longing for his quiet hearth at Chavaniac. Once more he believed that the reign of Liberty had come; he resigned his commandership. His Guards wept, and presented him with a sword made from the bolts of the Bastille. The Municipality voted him the slightly oppressive honours of a gold medal and a marble bust of Washington; they also decreed that their gift should be recorded upon his statue in the Hôtel de Ville. He had a triumphal journey through Auvergne, on which Adrienne accompanied him. Every village was decorated; every town sent forth its Mayor and illuminated scroll. At Plauzat, on their road, Madame de Montagu was staying, in the company of her Conservative father-in-law, the Marquis de Beaune. Madame Lafayette wished to visit them, but the testy old Noble would not admit Lafayette within his doors, and the two sisters could only meet in secret, at a wayside inn. It was with tears that Pauline de Montagu renounced the joy of sheltering the forbidden guests; with tears that she took leave of Adrienne—a farewell for more years than she dreamed of.

Lafayette settled at Chavaniac, with his wife, his three children—Anastasie, George and Virginie—and his old aunt, now seventy-two years of age, whose heart was with him, if her prejudices were not.

"As a lover of Liberty and Equality," he wrote in the autumn of 1791, "I enjoy the change which has placed all citizens on one level and only respects legal authorities. I can't tell you with what delight I bend my back before a village Mayor. I put as much pleasure and perhaps as much variety into absolute repose as, for these fifteen years

past, I have put into action. . . . It is only the duty of defending my country which could snatch me from private life." His wife was as happy as he, and they dreamed they had at last found the Arcadia they coveted.

In October, the *Législatif* had its first meeting; it was fated to sit for a year only—till September, 1792. Less brilliant than the *Constituante*, it was also more Radical. The position of parties had shifted in an almost farcical way. All the Moderates, Constitutionalists as well as Republicans, had united. To be curbed is a likelier fate than to be abolished; and to the Court, they were far more formidable than the extravagant Jacobins. Accordingly, the Royalists allied themselves with the Extreme *Gauche*; they even supported the nomination to the Mayorship of the king-hating Pétion, against that of Lafayette, which was mooted for a moment and dreaded as a catastrophe. Pétion came into office, and as time went on, the Moderates were submerged and the Jacobins prevailed. "Parties are at present divided as follows," wrote Lafayette, rather later: "Robespierre, Danton, Desmoulins constitute the Jacobin mob. These marionettes are worked from the wings, and serve the Court by disorganizing everything. . . . The other faction, generally called the "High Jacobins," supports the existing Ministry, and is composed of Bordelais, the Abbé Sieyes, Condorcet, Roederer. These fear and hate Robespierre, but don't dare to make themselves unpopular. They believe war to be inevitable . . . and agreed some time ago that, even though they hate me personally, they must keep full confidence in me as the imperturbable friend of Liberty and Equality, and the incorruptible defender of the Constitution."

These same Jacobins were having a busy autumn. They were anxious to get rid of their enemies. First they passed a decree declaring that all *émigrés* who had not returned to France were guilty of high treason ; then they schemed to get Lafayette out of the country. But the adder had to be offered in a basket of roses. Events provided them with one compatible with their interests. War with the Allied Princes was now imminent. An army was hastily formed ; and on December the 6th, Lafayette, Lückner, and Rochambeau were appointed as its generals. They were worthy comrades. Rochambeau had helped Washington, and both he and Lückner were heroes of the Seven Years' War. Lafayette's dream was over ; "the duty of defending his country" called him. He had to gird on his half-rusted sword and leave home at once for the frontier.

It was a terrible blow to his wife. He was eager for her to join him ; but she was afraid of cramping his freedom, or compromising his safety, and courageously refused. They tried to bridge over the gulf of absence by a correspondence as steady as the times permitted, but dangers of all sorts surrounded him.

What he dreaded most was the Patriots' criticism of his actions—and with reason. No sooner had he gone, than they accused him of "Republicanism", now a cardinal sin ; of deceiving the people ; and of being more dangerous than the aristocracy. "I have no party excepting the French nation," he bravely replied from Metz ; "but my friends and I will serve anybody who wishes to do good, defend Liberty and Equality, and uphold the Constitution." He had not long to wait before he proved his words. Dumouriez was made War Minister, and war was declared in April, 1792.

II

Within the walls of Paris, the rumour of battles produced only a pleasurable excitement. The spirit of suspicion was beginning to glide with wakeful eyes through its streets; but, unaware of this, it continued its usual round of work and gaieties. The Queen appeared at the Opéra Comique, held in what was formerly the Hôtel de Choiseul, in the Chaussée d'Antin—a theatre which was an aristocratic centre. So at first was the Théâtre de la Nation, or Comédie Française, near the Luxembourg, which the King and Queen also frequented, though it afterwards became Republican. The younger and more daring of the Court party went to the Théâtre Français de la Rue Richelieu—the third great playhouse of Paris. But the theatres increased amazingly; in 1790, there were no fewer than thirty-five of them, and nowhere else was the gulf between parties more firmly fixed. At the revolutionary theatres, there were almost revolts of enthusiasm. If an insufficiently heroic hero was crowned on the boards, his crown was torn from his head. Mirabeau, shortly before his death, was perceived in a box by the actors and personally apostrophized. Not long after, it was a soldier of the Bastille siege, who was discovered amongst the audience, borne on to the stage, and crowned with a grey woollen *bonnet du peuple*: the highest honour attainable. On yet another occasion, Voltaire's nephew was the sensation of the performance; on being recognised in the *parterre*, he rose and took the occasion to make a fine oration, proposing the removal of his uncle's coffin to Paris; then he sat down, and the drama continued as before. Voltaire's bust was always being spasmodically shifted from one noble position to another, according to the inspiration of the play. One performance was

altogether interrupted that it might be placed opposite that of Brutus. These outbursts of democracy were matched by patrician outbursts at the Royalist theatres. There was one play at which both sides met; boxes and amphitheatre exchanged invective, which grew to hubbub, and threatened to become more tragic than the tragedy on the stage.

Amongst the actors, party-spirit ran as high as amongst the spectators. At the Théâtre de la Nation, they divided into a Right and Left. Talma led the *Gauche*; Naudet the Conservatives. There were serious quarrels about the repertory, especially the performances of *Charles IX.* and *Brutus.* Naudet made a personal attack upon Talma and tried to get him arrested. Both were summoned before Mayor Bailly, but Talma won the day. The subject of the play then in hand was the storming of the Bastille. It was planned that a scene of reconciliation should take place in the middle of the stage battle. Mademoiselle Dugazon, the first actress, who sided with the fascinating Talma, rose amidst the cannon and made a soothing speech in blank verse to the whole staff; then Talma declaimed complimentary couplets to Naudet, and ended by an effort to embrace him. Naudet sulkily turned away his cheek, and the embrace did not succeed. More compliments—more couplets. At last Naudet, still gloomy, advanced and kissed Mademoiselle Dugazon and Talma upon the forehead. The quarrel was over, and the National Theatre henceforward acted Republican plays in peace.

The story of the playhouse is always a handbook to popular feeling. The strain of the real drama outside made the public demand light relaxation within its walls. Operettas and little scenes took hold of the stage; *leste*

subjects invaded it, and the throng of events caused a burst of topical songs. The names of the plays of 1791 are as good as a newspaper. Most of them quizzed the ecclesiastical changes. The dissolution of the convents was a favourite subject, so was "*The Marriage of the Pope*," a farce of the period. These skits, together with the fashionable caricatures, did no good to the cause of religion. Coarse jokes held the Mass up to ridicule; it was profaned or fell into disuse, and "*Vive la Nation*" was sung in the churches instead of the Credo.

The austerity of the early days of the movement was fast fading away. As orderly belief disappeared, the credulity which took its place became chaotic. Everybody was believed in; *députés* had visions, and prophetesses were easy to meet. There was a Jacobin Cassandra, Mademoiselle Brousse, who was especially in vogue, and foretold all the events of the Revolution. Other forms of spiritualism were also at work. St. Martin, the mystic, a kind of Swedenborgian, was starting on his career, and had a large following; every necromantic novelty attracted a congregation; and the more faith a man had in his own infallibility, the more he seemed to seek credentials from the powers he did not believe in. Yet throughout this whirl of disordered thought, side by side with the increasing coarseness and commonness of life, the Revolution never lets one forget it had a high and stern standard—too high for its promiscuous powers. It tried to impose Stoicism on a race of artists; the Stoicism, mixing with their blood, became first fanaticism, thirsting to exterminate luxury—then licence. The Bacchanalia of a great principle are even wilder than the orgies of pleasure.

The signs by which this principle—dying of its own excesses—strove to assert its existence were as pathetic

as they were ineffectual. The tendency to renounce luxury was visible in many ways. The very furniture showed it. The great satin beds of the Old World gave way to *Lits à la Fédération*, narrow and unadorned, or to hard *Lits Patriotiques*, supported by wooden columns. There were stiff Republican chairs and couches, in imitation of ancient Rome, and marble clocks, like the tombs of the Scipios, to match them. Madame de Genlis even had a room painted with scenes from Roman history, that her pupils might unconsciously imbibe classical virtues. Economy was one of them. Hitherto no decent household could exist without a retinue of servants, but now their number decreased, and it was the fashion to treat them as equals. There was a whole new circle of constitutional lackeys who called themselves *frères servans*, and were content to accept all the privileges of brothers without any of their responsibilities. They were not so shamelessly Jacobin as to ignore fine shades of rank amongst themselves, and formed a club which was cut up into three classes, impassably divided one from another: "the *Bouche*, the *Ecurie*, and the *Chambre*." These gentlemen-helps gave themselves up to philosophy and to melancholy; but the philosophy was ill-digested, and suicide became a distinction amongst them. Great honour was paid to a valet who killed himself by the advice of Seneca and Rousseau—his favourite authors.

The shopkeepers had better reason to cut their throats. This emancipation from luxury forced one after another to put up his shutters; milliners disappeared; silk-mercers were ruined; they cursed the craze for unselfishness which possessed the feminine world. The "Trait au Galant," the great ladies' shop, alone remained to testify that womanly vanity still existed. These critical conditions

were made more lurid by the money panic which soon prevailed. The uncertainty of events, the fever for gambling, and consequent creation of a paper currency, produced crashes and scares innumerable. At last buying and selling came almost to a standstill. The paper *assignats* were supposed to be the root of the evil, instead of its symptom; they were the only makeshift the Radicals could invent to stop the mouth of the public. Madame de Staël, who had been very busy with the Revolution all this time, now tried her hand at keeping Republican accounts, and concerted financial schemes with Talleyrand. There is a caricature of her sitting as Venus at her toilet-table; the Tariff of Assignats lies upon it; behind her chair stands the Abbé in the character of a lame Cupid, looking from her *beaux yeux* to the Tariff.

History is written in details; at any rate, it is punctuated by them. No sight or sound in the Paris of '91 to '92 was devoid of meaning, and most things were extraordinary. The city had reached that crisis of fever when the abnormal is taken for the normal, and disorder is the order of the day. Here we come across Boyer, the aspiring Jacobin, who sets up a *Bureau de Courage*—a duelling dépôt, where he pledges himself to fight all duels undertaken by Revolutionaries, so that the lives of Patriots may be spared. Further on in the street, stands a group of coachmen playing at "*Emigrette*, or the game of Coblenz," and knocking down *émigrés* with marbles. This is now the fashionable recreation of every circle—"a noble sport which dispenses one from the fatigue of thinking," as somebody said at the time. Twenty-five thousand émigrettes are made, and live almost as short a time as most of the *émigrés* themselves.

Powder is disappearing from all reflective heads and

becomes a marked badge of opinion. When Madame de Genlis' nephew (a good citizen, in spite of his birth) arrived with aggressively straight black hair at one of the last princely balls in Paris, he was mistaken for a jockey, and nobody would speak to him. All the ladies wore the white cockade hidden on their hearts, and danced with none but the *contre-révolution* cavaliers, who were careful to wear their hair in a frizz, ending in a semi-circle of curls.

In the daytime, these fine gentlemen still wandered contentedly in and out of their cafés, in the green coats, pink collars, black waistcoats and breeches, that had superseded their deep mourning for Joseph II. The cafés were quite as much party camps as the theatres. Royalists, Republicans, Jacobins, and Girondins each had their own. The very food was a chronicle ; one of them served *Soupe à la Cocarde*, another *Bonbons aux Trois Ordres réunis*, *Gâteaux à Lafayette*, or *Entre-mets du Roi et de la Reine.* The Patriot houses were the most enterprising. There was the Café de la Monnaie which suspected Lafayette, " the General of the Cornflowers," and took the trouble to burn his *Private Life*, which had just been published ; or the Café des Arts, which maliciously spread a rumour that he and Bailly had fled ; or Zoppé's Café, frequented by Hébert, which turned into a political club every day at five, and celebrated Benjamin Franklin's death by covering its chandeliers with crape, and writing "*Franklin est mort*" in giant letters over the door.

It was at Maf's aristocratic restaurant, in the Palais Royal, that the two chief Royalist newspapers, *Les Actes des Apôtres* and *l'Apocalypse*, were composed. Here the staff—the Apostles as they called themselves—met once a week at their *Dîner évangélique.* They included

Rivarol, Lally-Tollendal, Lauragrais, Régnier, Rulhière, Montlosier, and the younger Mirabeau. As they talked, their conversation was written down by an Apostle at one corner of the dinner-table and sent straight to the printer, as the new number. It was a brilliant periodical, more literary than political, illuminated by grotesque civic allegories, and sallies about the Assembly. It had its rivals, *Le Vieux Mercure de France*—the Times of the day, which boasted La Harpe and Chamfort as its literary representatives; *Le Plumpudding*, full of patrician epigrams; *La Tasse de Café sans Sucre*, edited by the younger Mirabeau; *Les Oeufs frais de Besançon*, in which Demoiselle Théroigne is described denouncing Lafayette's white horse as an aristocrat; and *La Lanterne Magique Nationale*, which makes "l'Évêque Clochant" (Talleyrand) exclaim with triumph: "I have never walked straight; I have two bad legs; I have made many *faux pas* in my life; but that does not hinder me from catching up other people."

Ridicule, the forlorn hope of a failing party, was the only weapon of the aristocratic papers. Their very names were an index of their contents, and satire filled their columns instead of news, for there was none that they dared relate. The revolutionary journals, on the contrary, were grave and earnest, in title as in matter. There are *La Passion, la Mort, et la Résurrection du Peuple*, which savours of religious revival; Marat's *Ami du Peuple*; Brissot's *Patriote Français*; Desmoulin's brilliant *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*; Prudhomme's *Révolutions de Paris*, and *Le Courier Français*, read by Charlotte Corday before she set forth on her mission. In spite of their number, all of them succeeded. The public cried out for more. "What merit have you in being a Patriot,"

asked St. Just, a little later, "when a newspaper brings you in £1,200 a year?"

The political ladies in their *salons* discussed the papers eagerly. They had their own organs, but the chief of these, *Le Véritable Ami de la Reine*, made fun of feminine politics. What they liked best was the sparkling froth of journalism—the pamphlets, lampoons, and topical stories which were sold in the streets, and, like the songs, increased with every fresh incident. There was a skit on Royalty, "*Le Grand Dénouement de la Constitution*," which was highly fashionable in 1791. "*Gros Louis*" is discovered sitting motionless in his armchair. Enter a citizen. "*Allons, M. Gros Louis*," he cries, "look sharp! Here is the nation come to visit you. Is it not time that you declare freely that you are very free?" *Gros Louis* (out of breath) replies: "Oh, oh yes, gentlemen; I answer for it, gentlemen; I declare it aloud—oh, goodness, how free I am!"

The hour was coming when he was not to be allowed even to sit still.

III

On the frontier, the army of the Revolution was fighting with inauspicious results; the hour of its success had not yet come. In the *Salle de Manège*, the Girondins, inspired by their prophetess, Madame Roland, were rising into prominence. Her *salon* was the armoury whence they came forth equipped for the battle, and when her husband, the Minister of the Interior, opened his lips in the Assembly, it was she who spoke through them; Buzot, a leading spirit, was hopelessly in love with her; she revived the souls that flagged, and cheered on the courageous; she reasoned like a man; she felt like a woman.

The handful of enthusiasts who had travelled in a coach from their Gironde to Paris, bent upon an ideal, an almost Platonic, Republic, had now swelled to a large and motley faction, whose members came from other parts, and had no geographical connection with the Girondins—only the spiritual relationship of similar aspirations. Abstinence from violent means was one of their original conditions, and provincial self-government one of their secondary aims. There seems no real reason why, in their earlier days, they should not have co-operated with Lafayette; but he was too constitutional for their visionary ideas, and there were minute technical differences which made a gulf between them. Gradually they joined the cry for the abdication of the King, and made common cause with the Jacobins. Noble of intellect and, but for their women, weak of will, they represented the Culture of the Revolution—Culture with its impressionable foibles, as well as its refinements. Their temper and their views were both academic, and their attitude resembled that of the Fabians in our own day: the Fabians translated into the French temperament. Like them, they were eloquent in debate, lavish of theory, and confident of reaching their ends by gradual methods and brilliant dialectics. They were far more subtle than the *Bonnets Rouges*; but it was these that covered the most conspicuous heads.[1]

[1] The original men of the Gironde were soon joined by two groups of Jacobin Dissenters—Roland and his followers, Brissot and his Brissotins. (The term "Girondins," as a collective name for the whole party, does not occur till after August the 10th, 1792; before that, they were known by various designations.) It is true that the prominent and active Brissot had much extremer tendencies than most of his colleagues; so had Pétion, and two or three others. But though they wrote and spoke with some violence, their deeds did not match their words till later days, when the influence of Brissot and Pétion, and the growing ambition of Madame Roland, led the rest into excesses.

On June the 16th the irrepressible Lafayette wrote a letter to the *Législatif*, warning it as to the growing influence of the Jacobins. Their fury at this was unbounded: they swore his destruction. The foolish King chose this moment to veto a popular decree for a camp of volunteers near Paris; what was worse, he dissolved the Patriot Ministry. His action gave the signal to the Incendiaries. Pétion, Danton, and Santerre drilled and armed troops of beggars; ruffians were admitted to the *Législatif*, to overawe the Moderates by their threats; the Terror had practically begun. The first step to be taken was the abolition of the Royal Veto, and the measure was proposed in the *Salle de Manège*. Debate followed upon debate; the people outside grew impatient for the result, and took matters into their own hands. They would do away with the Veto themselves.

Again we must look with the eyes of Carlyle to see how they managed it. We can watch the "Procession of Black Breeches" mustering in the streets, early in the morning of June the 20th, '92, under Santerre and St. Huruge. A pair of old black silk breeches floated flag-like on a pike-staff in their midst, with "*Tremblez, Tyrans; voilà les Sans-culottes*," written over it. They marched to the *Salle de Manége*, planting a Tree of Liberty in passing, on the Feuillan terrace of the Tuileries. The *Députés* promised many things, soothed them about the Veto, and let them go. On they rushed to the palace of the Tuileries, and forced the doors; they surged in and out, invading the Royal presence, screaming that the Veto must disappear and the Patriot Ministers come in. *Gros Louis*, with a

Even then, lurid action as well as lurid speech may always be traced back to the same persons—the worst spirits of the faction, who by no means represent the majority.

bonnet rouge upon his head, did his best to mollify them. At last he partly succeeded, and they dispersed, exhausted by hunger and fatigue.

When Lafayette heard of this outrage, the news came like an electric shock. With his usual impetuosity, and his customary scorn of danger, he left the frontier at once, and travelled night and day till he reached Paris, a week and twenty-four hours after the occurrence. Travel-stained and tired, the mud still on his riding-boots, he stood at the bar of the *Législatif*, expostulating, arguing and demanding punishment of the malefactors. The silent members, angry and concentrated, only spoke to censure his coming without permission, and to ask for explanations. But outside their walls, he still had power.

When he came away, his coach rolled off, surrounded by blue uniforms and enthusiastic Feuillans; M. Resson, the proprietor of a revolutionary café opposite, heard them shout, "*A bas les Jacobins!*" as they went by. A crowd collected on his track and accompanied him home; they planted one of their trees before his door. That same night, in his deserted house, he held a council of National Guards and Feuillans. They discussed what could be done to save the nation from these regicide Jacobins who were fatal to liberty. The high-spirited General decided to review what forces he could collect on the Feuillans' Terrace next day; he was certain he could raise an army. Only one hundred men appeared; what matter? There would be more the day after. Meanwhile he paid the King a visit. It was desperate work. The Queen refused her aid in any scheme, and he was forced to depart as he came. Another council in his study; another review. This time only thirty recruits arrived. It was on Saturday; Sunday saw him on his road back to the army,

weary, disgusted, but not hopeless. At any rate he had obtained the expulsion of Mayor Pétion ; but, in two days, this favourite of the Incendiaries was reinstated in full civic glory.

His visit had other results ; he left his enemies behind him. His action in leaving the frontier was still unexplained ; they would not let him off, but formed a committee to inquire into his conduct. Besides, he was giving them fresh food for their suspicion. Why was he moving towards Paris with his soldiers, at this particular moment, when the terror-striking rumours of the Duke of Brunswick's approach with an immense army were demanding the concentration of all patriotic forces ? For once, Lafayette's enemies were not wholly wrong ; he was planning a march to Compiègne. The King was to ask permission to take a change of air there ; Lafayette would then surround and regenerate him. He was to swear afresh to the Constitution, and emerge a new sort of King—a Republican Monarch, after Lafayette's own impossible pattern. Then he, his brothers and the heroic General would march against the *émigrés*, those old friends of Versailles, whom a Republican king was bound to look upon as his mortal enemies. The scheme failed, and Lafayette was definitely accused of marching on Paris. His aide-de-camp, Bureaux de Pusy, got himself into danger by appearing before the *Législatif* to refute these charges against his chief. But the committee could not find sufficient evidence against Lafayette, and were forced to acquit him.

This did not do at all. Iron-browed Danton and busy, pioneering Brissot could not let the matter drop. With Isnard, they formed a sub-committee to sift the facts again. Their tempers were not improved by the fact that the allies had crossed the frontier, and that the Duke of

Brunswick had issued his Proclamation threatening to rase Paris to the ground, if it did not submit to the King. The *Législatif* did not know what course to take; it was clogged by the hesitation of the Girondins, as much as by the incoherence of the *Gauche* and the ruffians they had imported. It ended by doing nothing but formulate its hatred of Lafayette. The sub-committee's final verdict on him was promised for August the 8th.

This was in July. At the close of the month, the call for abdication was universal. Within a few days, it became a shout. The question was being discussed in the *Législatif*; they tried to pacify the mob by promising that on August the 9th it should receive a decisive answer. The mob replied that if it did not, it would take the matter into its own hands. Lafayette's affairs were forgotten in more crucial business. Debates raged, but August the 9th passed, and no answer had been given. Meanwhile, the people had made their preparations. Arms were distributed; barricades and camps sprang up throughout the districts. The tinder was all ready.

The match was laid to it by Suleau, a National Guard and a journalist. In the *Actes des Apôtres* he had published a satire upon Demoiselle Théroigne, making fun of her *amours* with Populus. He was deputed by the frightened Municipality to inspect and report upon the popular fortifications. Théroigne was standing talking on the Terrace of the Feuillans, a Grenadier cap on her head and pistols in the belt of her short red skirt, when he passed that way, intent upon his errand. She accused him to the knot of people round her; they seized him, and tore him to pieces. It was a good enough pretext. The noise had summoned their allies, and the whole army of ruffians rushed upon the Tuileries.

We know how they stormed it; how the chivalrous Swiss—the King's soldiers—fought hand to hand with the patriotic Marseillese, their rivals in courage; how a hundred carts of dead were driven to the Madeleine; how the mob rushed into the palace and found that their victims had gone. For, at the first signal of danger, the Royal party had slipped away and taken refuge in the *Législatif*. Here they remained for seventy-two hours, spending their nights in three little upper closets, their days in the reporters' gallery, and listening to debates as to whether they really existed, or were only the shadows of themselves. At the end of that time, the question was decided —they were only shadows. Vergniaud's speech, proposing to dethrone them, clinched their fate. They were driven in Pétion's coach to the Temple Prison, only to emerge for supreme reasons.

Moderates and aristocrats were slaughtered all over Paris; the arrests soon became wholesale, and they did not know where to turn, unless it were to their old friends. It was the occasion for heroic hospitality, and a crucial test of good faith. Morris stood it for one, the more safely that he was a foreigner. All through the fatal 10th, the nobles crowded into his house, and he made it into a secret inn for his *ci-devant* acquaintance. In a few days the Jacobins had arranged a provisionary government—a Council-general of the Commune, and a Committee of the Revolution, led by Robespierre. These were to last till the National Convention was organized—the National Convention, which was to be absolute without tyranny. But, meanwhile, Lafayette possessed the heart of the Military; the support of the Military was needful; it might be wise to win them over. So, without consulting him, the Commune published in its newspapers his approval of August

the 10th, and contentedly sent commissioners to announce the new Government to the different divisions of the army. Lafayette was furious at these insolent measures, and imprisoned the commissioners. He would not stir an inch from his position, but desired his troops to accompany him to Paris ; this they refused to do, but they deputed him to represent them there. In vain he obeyed them, and went in company with Alexandre de Lameth. He came and departed with as little result as before.

On August the 19th, the Commune declared him a traitor. A Jacobin swore to bring him, alive or dead, to its bar. He was back at the northern frontier. There were three courses open to him : to go on resisting and be executed ; to join the Jacobins ; or to flee to a foreign country. Lafayette regarded his life as valuable, and chose the latter. He planned to escape, by Brussels, to England or America. He had already been deposed from his generalship, and Dumouriez was to replace him. Lafayette confided his men to Lückner's care, till the new commander should arrive, and started at night with Alexandre de Lameth and his aides-de-camp, Maubourg and Bureaux de Pusy. Their journey was fraught with peril ; all the country on their route was in the hands of the aristocratic Allies, who rivalled the Jacobins in hating Lafayette. After some travelling, they found themselves at Rochefort, an Austrian outpost. Thence de Pusy started for Namur, where he hoped to get their passports. This would have been easy, if they had been less trusting and had changed Lafayette's name. They thought the Governor was a friend ; but his friendship was not proof against the triumph of producing such a prize. He gave the passports, and allowed them to proceed unconsciously as far as Liège. But here he had them arrested.

Belgium was occupied by Prussia, and it was Prussians who examined the prisoners. Accusations were heaped upon Lafayette. Amongst other things, he was said to have stolen and secreted the public treasure of France. Only one chance of freedom was given him—that of recanting his opinions. This he absolutely refused to do, and he and his companions were imprisoned in the Prussian fortress at Wesel.

Many things had happened to his wife before the news of this calamity reached her.

Arrest

CHAPTER VI

Arrest

ALL these months, Adrienne had remained at Chavaniac. Her mother and sister left her at the moment that Lafayette departed for the army, and she said farewell to them, little dreaming it was for the last time. Her grief at losing them was the less that they were going to Paris, where, if anywhere, they could get information about his movements. Their feelings on leaving her were acute, and a fresh sorrow was added to that of absence. Recent events had doubtless unsettled her, and she was passing through a phase of religious doubt — "*convalescence morale*"—as she called it. Her faith in God was sure, but certain dogmas filled her with questionings. She could no longer take the Sacrament, or receive comfort from the rites which fortified her mother's soul against every event. Time brought back belief to her, the stronger for her wrestlings, but it seemed to desert her just when she most needed it. The tragedies of August the 10th were not calculated to restore it; they shook her very soul. Then came the news that a price had been set on her husband's head. She waited, trembling, to hear of his death. At last, on August the 24th, the Vicomtesse de Noailles, her faithful correspondent, let her know of his escape from France. Every inmate of the house came to rejoice with her—the more touchingly that a sacking

of the Château by the fabulous "brigands" was hourly expected. She put everything in order, burned or hid his papers, and resolved to send away the children. A constitutional Curé came to offer her a refuge in the mountains. She accepted it for her son and his tutor, M. Frestel, and sent the girls to a small town, two miles off. She herself remained at Chavaniac with her old aunt, who could not be moved. Her heart was calm now that she believed Lafayette to be out of danger.

Her head was still calmer. Directly the roads seemed fairly safe, she thought it expedient to show herself at Brioude, the chief town of the district. Its citizens gave her a kind of ovation; the aristocratic ladies of the place were as eager as they to do her honour, but she refused their attentions. "I regard as an insult," she said, "every tribute that I cannot share with my husband—every word that tries to separate my cause from his." At the same time she did not fear the Patriots, or retreat an inch from her position. She went publicly to hear Mass celebrated by an unconstitutional priest, and then returned quietly to Chavaniac.

Here she found further fruits of her courageous deliberation. She had actually asked the Jacobins to put their mark, the famous seal, upon her doors, as a protection against the mountain brigands, who were still looked for. On her return, she found officials in the house, who treated her with the greatest respect. The odious word *émigré* was left out of the *procès-verbal* which, according to custom, they drew up, and there seemed nothing to fear from Government. Under these circumstances, it appeared safe to have her children back, and she sent for them. It was now September. Just before their arrival, came two letters from her husband, announcing his arrest.

Her daughters found her in great distress, but hopeful. She could not believe that the Republic would lay hands upon its father, Parmenides. This was in the first days of September, 1792. She was only to hear from him once in 1793, and then not again till the summer of 1795. This silence was one of the worst horrors of the three years before her.

As for Lafayette, even now, on his road to prison, he was as sanguine as ever. He did not think that his arrest was serious, and in one of the letters to his wife makes a definite plan for his family to join him in England. He would travel there the moment he was released—in a few days at most. He recognised at last, however, that the Revolution of '92 was not the Revolution of '89, and that he could find no safety in his own country.

"My nation," he writes to Adrienne . . . "would have been free, and worthy of being so, if personal interests had not combined to corrupt the mind of the public. . . . As for me, it has sworn my ruin long since. If I had more ambition than morality, I could lead a life very different from this one; but between crime and me, there will never be anything in common. I was the last man who defended the Constitution to which we had plighted our troth."

The Stuart Royalists would not have felt more triumphant at the capture of Hampden, than did *émigrés* and princes at their possession of Lafayette. Such a prisoner once in their power, they were in no hurry to let him go. His imprisonment in the Prussian fortress of Wesel was incredibly severe. Daylight and air were denied him; his bed was so narrow that he could hardly turn in it; his food so coarse that often he could not touch it. At length his health became endangered. His captors attempted to

make him reveal the plans of the Patriotic army; he refused, and his hardships were redoubled.

One pain at least was spared him: he did not see the newspapers. From August onwards, they were full of abominations. No aristocrat's life was now safe, and the September massacres of countless prisoners were only a corollary of the horrors. There was no appeal anywhere. Nominally, the country was ruled by the National Convention—in reality by the Committee of Public Safety. Danton, Robespierre, Hébert, not yet divided, were its leaders; St. Just and Desmoulins were prominent names; Brissot and Roland worked round about it. It was a committee of fanatics, each sincere according to his lights; as sincere, if not as deep, as our English Puritans. But the Frenchmen lacked the God who alone makes fanaticism either logical, or forcible; still more did they lack the control of temperament which gave the weight of morality to Cromwell's party, and even dignified regicide, although it was unable to exculpate it.

On September the 10th, the château at Chavaniac was invested by the Republic. Armed men entered it at eight o'clock in the morning, led by a Jacobin who was suspected of just having murdered a prisoner. The commissioner, another man of ill-repute, showed Madame Lafayette his warrant to remove her to Paris, and a letter from M. Roland to the same effect. At this moment her little girl, whom the governess could not restrain, rushed into the room, resolved not to be parted from her mother. Adrienne was forced to promise that the child should go with her. Lafayette's wife was not the woman to hesitate; she felt that her safety lay in reaching some authority that might protect her. Accordingly she gave orders that the horses should be instantly put to, and,

whilst waiting for the carriage, she opened her desk and took possession of her husband's letters. "You will see by these, sir," she said to the Commissioner, "that if there were a Tribunal in France, M. de Lafayette would have brought them his head, confident that there was no action of his life that could compromise him in the eyes of the Patriots." "The Tribunal of to-day, madam," he replied, "is public opinion."

All this time, the soldiers had been roaming over the house. One of them was looking at the family portraits. "Whose pictures are these?—great aristocrats doubtless," he asked of the aunt's maid, herself aged and almost blind. "They are the pictures of honest folk," she answered, "and if *they* were here now, things would not go so badly." The soldier had his own repartee: he pierced several of the canvases and walked off.

Adrienne managed to slip away to implore her younger daughter to hide herself. The elder stayed by her side and helped her with the old aunt, now seventy-three, whom no consideration had ever moved from Chavaniac, but who, in this hour of danger, insisted on going with her niece to Paris; and the party set off for Puy, the capital of the Department, where the legal examination was to take place. They were accompanied by the faithful servants, who marched with the soldiers, in the hope that they might be of use to their mistress. The sad journey was cheered by the honours paid them in every village they passed through. They slept at one of them and easily reached Puy next day. The entrance into the town was nervous work. A few days earlier a prisoner had been massacred as he approached it, but the Lafayette party arrived safely, excepting for some stones that were thrown at them. "If your father knew you were here, he

would be anxious, but he would be very proud of you," said the mother to her daughter, who showed nothing but joy at being present. Adrienne proudly asked to be taken at once to the *Département*, or Municipal Court of Justice. "I respect the orders of Government as much as I hate those that come from other sources," she said to the official.

The members of the *Département* were immediately convoked, and she appeared before them. "I place myself confidently under your protection," she began, "because I see in you the authority of the people, and wherever I see it, I respect it. You receive your orders from M. Roland, or any one else you like; as for me, I only wish to receive them from you, and I make myself your prisoner." Then she demanded that Lafayette's letters, which had been taken from her, should be written out before they were sent to Paris, and a copy given to her. She also asked leave to read them aloud to the Court. Consent was given. Some one objected that the task might prove too painful for her. "On the contrary," she rejoined, "the feelings they express support me and are my best consolation."

She read out the letters in a firm voice. Their effect upon the Court was extraordinary. All the bigwigs of the town had been summoned, and had drifted into the Hall, one after the other. The same emotion seized all of them; plaudits alternated with tears, and Lafayette's eloquence, in the lips of his wife, once more prevailed. She kept her spirit quiet, never allowed herself to remember the stake at issue, and observed every face with undisturbed attention. She even had leisure to think of others, and imagining that the Mayor would compromise himself by his benevolence to her, she unselfishly re-

established him in public opinion by complaining that he had long since ceased to visit her at Chavaniac.

When she had finished her reading, and had revised the copy of the letters, she requested that she might lodge in the house of the *Département* for the remainder of her time at Puy. She tried to show the Court the danger of a journey to Paris and the injustice of her detention, and ended by saying that, if they persisted in imprisoning her, she begged it might be at Chavaniac. If they consented, she would give her word of honour never to go out. The *Département* was obliging. It granted her the lodgings she desired, and wrote to the Ministry, and M. Roland in particular, to demonstrate the perils of proceeding to Paris to present her petition about Chavaniac. She was allowed to enclose a note to Brissot, whom she had known of old.

"I believe you are a true fanatic for liberty," she wrote, "it is an honour which at this moment I pay to very few people. I will not inquire whether this fanaticism, like that for religion, usually defeats its own object, but I am convinced that a zealous friend of the slaves cannot be a prop of tyranny; that you esteem, nay, almost respect, M. Lafayette as a courageous and faithful friend of freedom, even when you persecute him because his opinions make against your new revolution and the party you have embraced. . . . I consent" (she proudly ends) "to owe you this service."

Her confinement was not rigorous. The National Guards of the town, remembering her name, offered to take the place of her rude Patriotic gaolers. Her friends were allowed to visit her, and managed to bring her news of her children. Presently she heard the rumour that Lafayette was imprisoned in a Prussian fortress. It filled

her with despair. Just at this moment, when she had prayed to return to Chavaniac and given her word not to leave it, came the imperative need to escape from France and join her husband. She could neither forfeit honour, nor rest till she had formed some plan. Her exasperation was aggravated by a letter from Roland granting her petition. He had seen her letter to Brissot, however, had taken offence at its haughty tone, and avenged himself by filling his note to her with insults to Lafayette. "Your expression," he perorated, "about consenting to owe Brissot a service, savours of the superannuated pride that is commonly called *noblesse*." As her correspondence was under civic supervision, this composition was read aloud in the *Département*, and produced much the same transports as Lafayette's writings had done, a few days earlier. It did her no good with the Municipality. They now insisted that a perpetual guard should be planted at the doors of her Château, as a condition of her return there. One of the soldiers, engaged for this purpose, asked if she had given her promise to stay there. "Yes," said an official. "*Dans ce cas*," replied the other, "*j'en répondrais même seul, car c'est une brave femme.*" But even one sentinel was too much for Madame Lafayette. "I declare, Messieurs," she exclaimed, "that if you put a guard at my door, I retract my word. I am not shocked at your not believing me to be an honest woman; my husband proved much more effectually that he was a good patriot; but I must beg you to allow me my faith in my own integrity, and not to cumber my word with bayonets."

She gained her point, on condition that the Municipality was to visit her every fortnight. Some of its officials were there when she returned to Chavaniac, but, far from re-

senting this, she invited them to supper and made them join her in a toast to Lafayette. "I feel great pleasure and am much honoured in being under the protection of these gentlemen; but that is because I respect them highly," she said of them. It was now October. M. Frestel had stolen from his hiding-place among the mountains to welcome her. He appeared this same evening, at midnight, and talked about the children with her till the small hours of the morning. Her presence seems to have infused the spirit of chivalry into all who approached her, and her boy's tutor was no exception. In her pain at being separated from her husband, she determined to send him their son. Once out of France, she thought, he would easily reach him. M. Frestel was to get a merchant's patent and then a passport for the fair at Bordeaux, whence he and the child would try to reach London. Here they were to seek out Mr. Pinkney, the American Ambassador, and consult with him about the measures to be taken for Lafayette's deliverance. Everything seemed to promise well for the scheme, but she felt that her strength would fail her if she bade farewell to her boy, and she refused to see him again before he left.

Happily for her, at this critical moment one emotion was overwhelmed by another. All her energies were now devoted to procuring Lafayette's freedom. She wrote to Washington begging him to address the Powers on his behalf and force them to send him to America. If his family could join him there, so much the happier; if not, they would be content to know he was safe. She wrote to M. Roland too, a letter full of proud humility—the proudest pride of all—and begged his permission to travel to her husband's prison. She even conquered her reluctance to address Brissot, after his last betrayal of her con-

fidence, and sent him a note of thanks for his services, and entreaty for his influence to help her reach her husband. The fact that now, in October (every month then was a generation), Brissot was gradually separating himself from the Terrorists, made her task the easier; and the letter she wrote him was perhaps the most characteristic that she ever penned—swift, lucid, eloquent with emotion.

"I ought not to write to you again," she exclaims, "after the use you make of my letters . . . but do not expect to find either bitterness, or the pride of oppressed innocence in my expressions. I shall plead my cause with only one desire—to gain it. . . . My husband's misfortunes, the risks to his health—everything that I fear, everything that I ignore—all these evils coming together are really not bearable, nailed as I am to a spot so far from him. And when I wonder what service the torture of my heart can render my country, I cannot believe that it will persist in binding me with these leaden chains, because of a promise that I made too lightly. . . . It is laying too much importance on my person to keep me here. . . . I confess, sir, that I can never believe that the man who for so many years pursued the emancipation of the Negroes, can refuse to use his eloquence in delivering from slavery a woman who asks no other liberty than to go and shut herself up in the walls of a prison. . . . In short you *must* deliver me."

Brissot sent a prevaricating answer, and hid his vagueness in elaborate phrases. He wished, he said, "that it were possible to let Madame give herself up to "*the diligent sentiment which animated her.*" M. Roland was much more moved, and replied at once that he had brought her request before the Committee, but warned her that her

departure from France would give the worst impression and be full of danger. She thanked him for his courtesy, but nothing further resulted from the correspondence. Something had to be done. In despair at getting no news of Lafayette for three months, she wrote to Frederick of Prussia to entreat his deliverance. Morris, whom she consulted, sent her a model of the State letter he thought she ought to send; she refused to copy it, because she considered it too humble. Her grief, she told the king, should be her only advocate. "As for me," her note goes on, "I will only show how much he deserves to be loved." But her words fell on deaf ears; she received no reply.

New anxieties were besetting her. Her messenger to Paris during all this correspondence had been the husband of her mother's maid, the d'Ayens' faithful valet, Beauchet, who was sent by the Duchess to her daughter. He had also acted as newsbearer—a function of great value at this moment, when they dared not write by the post. In November, '92, he brought her tidings of Louis XVI.'s impending trial; later, of the majestic death which crowned his unmajestic life. She trembled for her family, so intimately bound up with the Court.

After their return from Chavaniac in '92, they lived in the greatest seclusion, deepened by Madame d'Ayen's sorrow at the death of her saintly sister, Madame Lesparre. It was only to get news of Lafayette that they went out at all. The Duke had emigrated to Switzerland, but June the 20th, the Day of Black Breeches, had brought him back to protect his family and his King. When Lafayette appeared to call the *Législatif* to account, the Duchess thanked God for his salvation. For the first time, she felt not only impersonal appreciation of his motives, but personal joy in his action. It was then that he saw her for

the last time. The havoc that followed made it expedient to leave the Hôtel de Noailles, which was so near the Tuileries, and she hid herself in a small house in the Faubourg St. Germain. Through all this time of daily peril, neither she nor the Vicomtesse de Noailles let anything interfere with the punctuality of their gay letters to their Adrienne, and it was only August the 10th that put an end to regular communication. A short while after that day of terror—increased for the Duchess by her husband's absence at the Tuileries—they were both summoned to the Hôtel de Ville to account for their conduct in moving from their home. Even the Jacobins were satisfied by their answers, and they returned to the Hôtel de Noailles. Not for long, however. The massacres of September the 2nd again warned them to depart.

They went to the house of Madame d'Aguesseau at Poissy, near St. Germain, where the news of Adrienne's arrest reached them. The terrified mother wrote to M. Roland; he assured her the imprisonment was only nominal, and she gradually calmed herself, soothed by the chivalry of the Duke, who required middle age and a Revolution to bring out his best qualities. The fate of the Bourbons had made a deep mark upon his brilliant nature. She felt that religion might come to him, and, for the first time, he occupied her thoughts.

She had come to Poissy to be near her father-in-law, the old Duc de Noailles, until such time as it was safe for him to have her under his roof. At last the Maréchal, now ill and shattered, was able to shelter her, and she and her daughter migrated there. They led a life of devotion to his ailments, only diversified by perilous expeditions to Paris, as often as they could make them. Steadfast amidst change, their journeys were always inspired by the

same motives: first, to seek those religious consolations more necessary to them than bread, and impossible to procure outside the labyrinthine city; then to get news of Lafayette to send to Adrienne. Their spiritual comfort they found, with beating hearts, in underground cellars and deserted garrets, at the hands of priests, pale from starvation and from close concealment. In their other task, they were helped by young M. de Custine, as well as by the zeal of their friend, the Princesse d'Hénin, and that of Mr. Pinkney, in London. At length, in the summer, they contrived to see Lafayette's valet, who had been sent home from the prison, but could tell them little of his master, whom he had not been allowed to behold. They were forced to rest content with sending him to Chavaniac.

Madame d'Ayen would have been alone, had it not been for the angelic Louise de Noailles. The Duke had again fled to Switzerland. Madame de Tessé had emigrated. Madame de Montagu, who was hourly expecting a child, had been obliged to walk with her husband all the way from Paris to the sea-coast, in order to avoid the dangers of public conveyances. Then she crossed to England. In all her preparations for departure, she was helped by her favourite sister, Rosalie de Grammont, also about to become a mother. On their last day together, at five o'clock, on a bitter December morning, they stole out through the snow, to the hidden garret which was their oratory. So fearful were they lest their footprints should reveal it, that they did not stop at the door, but made a wide circuit and returned to it. Then they entered—to pray at a deal altar, by the light of a solitary candle, amid a congregation so still and cautious that, until the sisters lifted their heads, they were not aware of its presence. In the evening, the Montagus started, with no future means of subsistence but

Pauline's diamonds, which Rosalie counselled her to take. Madame de Grammont and her husband lingered in Paris until lingering meant death; they then escaped to the depths of Franche-Comté, where they remained in hiding. She did not dare even to visit Madame d'Ayen, whom she never saw again. Under these circumstances, the Vicomtesse de Noailles could not leave the Duchess, though her husband was in England, imploring her to come to him. For the love of her mother and her sister, she decided to make this supreme sacrifice and be faithful to the end. It proved an offering greater than she expected—that of life itself. Both women tried to console themselves by planning a visit to Chavaniac; but this last comfort was also taken from them. As they were about to set out, the old Marshal fell suddenly ill, and they could not leave him. His death, directly afterwards, changed all their plans, for they could not desert his widow. To Madame Lafayette's dismay, she learned, a short time after, that they had moved back again to Paris—the centre of all danger.

Meanwhile, she had spent a troubled summer. It is true that in the spring M. Roland had remembered his promise, and sent her word that she was no longer a prisoner. But her liberty was only nominal, hedged in as she was on every side by the laws against the *ci-devant* nobles, which supervised all their actions. It was impossible to leave the Department without permission. Still, she would not despair of joining her husband. At last, in June, two letters reached her through Morris, written from the prison at Magdeburg to which Lafayette had been removed, and describing his sufferings there. This gave her fresh impetus. On Morris' advice, she wrote to the Princess of Orange, the King of Prussia's sister, but received nothing more

than a polite and evasive answer. An ardent article in praise of Lafayette appeared in a German newspaper, and she saw it. It turned out to be by Klopstock, the hero of the Romantic Movement, and she at once addressed him; silence was the only result. It was a further blow to her when she heard from M. Frestel, at Bordeaux, that the journey to England was impossible and her boy must return. The joy of having him back was almost destroyed by disappointment.

Money difficulties added themselves to other anxieties. Lafayette had been unjustly described as an *émigré*, and his fortune was consequently sequestrated according to the Jacobin decrees. Debts pressed heavily upon her, and her first aim was to discharge them. She would not think of leaving France before doing this and securing the comfort of her old aunt. Risky though it was, she made journey after journey to Puy, to represent to the *Département* the iniquity of treating Lafayette as an *émigré*, and to recover enough of his income to pay his debts with. In vain; the officials liked her personally, but they could do nothing; all that remained to her was to "*enregistrer les créanciers*," and go home.

Poverty pressed harder. The Château was almost starving. For her children's sake, she at last wrote to Gouverneur Morris and begged him to advance her a moderate sum on the surety of any pecuniary claims she might possess in the future. He responded generously with a large loan, and refused the security. Upon this they lived with the greatest austerity, and out of this they had to save. Their home life at this moment was touching, both in its sternness and its gaiety. Madame Lafayette provided for everything; all her efforts went to lighten the load for her children, from the youngest to the eldest,

who, at fifteen, had suffered imprisonment with her. She went on with their education; she invented amusements for them; she spent whole mornings reading to them by the river, where they could look at the hills and forget the gloom inside the house. Nor did she limit her exertions to her family. Every Sunday, she gathered it around her, together with the poor of the village; then she read and prayed with them, and ended by reciting the Mass. The suspense of these last months had made her feel such a need of faith that belief had returned to her. She was called a fanatic in the country, a name as dangerous then as that of Aristocrat. As it was impossible to accuse her of being the one, the Jacobins caught hold of the other charge against her, and used it to the best advantage.

It was an evil moment; the persecution of the priests had reached its height. Several had been massacred at Puy, and one at Brioude. Now the Curé of Chavaniac was arrested. Madame de Lafayette intervened on his behalf. Montfleury, President of the local Courts—one of the few noble-hearted Jacobins—had once told her that whenever she sent him an unfortunate to be saved, she would make him her grateful and devoted servant. She remembered this, and begged him to help her with the Curé. The result was that the accused was acquitted by the peasants of the Village Council. But the town of Brioude refused to execute such a favourable verdict. She went there at once, on the pretext of some business. The poor man's friends implored him to take the civic oath and save himself; his enemies schemed his execution. At last the town agreed to await the decision of the *Département.* Knowing that this meant death, she contrived to delay the messenger and get hold of the kindlier officials. The civic oath was dispensed with, and before the

fiercer party could do anything, the Curé was sent home free. The affair made a noise in the country, and was carefully stored up against her.

It was the turn of the Girondins to be persecuted, classed as they now were with the Moderates and the "Limited Republicans." They had gone farther than they meant, in voting with the Unlimited Republicans for the death of the King. Their central principle of avoiding violence was betrayed, and they were punished by losing unity. But the logical consequences of regicide they could not face. The September massacres had disgusted Roland; his colleagues followed his example and fell off from the Terrorists. The people cried out upon their vacillation and swore to have their blood. Twenty-two among them were especially mentioned. They hoped the Convention would save them, though the mob had forced Danton to sift matters—Danton, the mighty Atlas who upbore the "Mountain," as the extreme party was called. The desertion of General Dumouriez—"himself a kind of Girondin"—in April, just after his brilliant victories for the Republic, had precipitated matters. Between Girondins and Mountain, in the month of May, a terrible split arose; it ended with the famous scene in the Convention (June the 2nd), when the twenty-two were arrested, with ten of their fellow Girondins. Vergniaud, Brissot, Buzot, Barbaroux, Guadet, Lasource, Gensonné, Rabaut, the Rolands, were removed from the stage. In July, their Jael arose: Charlotte Corday killed Marat, and was guillotined. Some of the twenty-two contrived to get away from Paris, but others of their colleagues were promptly imprisoned in their stead, till the original number was made up. The luckless captives lingered on for five weary months in confinement, and then died on the scaffold.

The rest of the seventy-two who made up the party wandered forth over land and sea, starving in forests or freezing in hay-lofts, and Louvet, Isnard, and three others were the only ones that escaped. Even the immoderate Thomas Paine, whose "*Rights of Man*" had fired the Convention to invite him to Paris as a Député, was now cast into the Luxembourg for his Girondism, because he was rather more humane than was expected of him. Released months afterwards, by a stroke of fortune, this *Girondin malgré lui* reaped the fruits of others' heroism, and survived the Rolands as the sufferer for a cause with which he had no real connection.

The condemnation of the Girondins and their identification with the Moderates cast a fresh odium on Lafayette's name. Dumouriez' desertion had already redoubled the dangers of aristocrats, and a commission was instigated to examine all *ci-devant* papers. The officials came to Chavaniac, but departed content. They were soon followed by Lacoste, the Jacobin Député for the department, who went about distributing incendiary writings against the Girondins and covering Lafayette with insults. He killed two men suspected of moderation, and swore to arrest Madame Lafayette. She wisely thought it better to forestall him by visiting him at Brioude and explaining the innocence of her retreat. He received her with unction, and assured her there was no question of danger, only of a decree forbidding more than three aristocrats to be found together. "Your sentiments are worthy of you, Madame," he concluded. "I don't trouble myself, Monsieur, as to whether or no they are worthy of me," she replied—"I only wish them to be worthy of him."

There was certainly no hesitation about her. At a moment when nearly all the wives of the fated *émigrés*,

however devoted, were trying to get papers of divorce and thus save their lives, she not only refused to think of such a thing, but rejoiced to sign every paper with "*La femme Lafayette.*" She knew now that she must remain at her post. At one moment, she had some idea of migration to Girondin Lyons; but the terrible siege and devastation that punished its Girondism put an end to her plan.

At the end of the summer, Lafayette's estates were put up to sale. The Patriots began with a mill near Chavaniac. This was more than his old aunt could bear. In spite of her seventy-three years, she insisted on going to the District Council, accompanied by Adrienne, and on protesting in person. Its impressionable members applauded her, and even wished to record her words in the papers they were drawing up. "No, gentlemen," she said, "that might compromise you. But I should like to enter my separate protest. I have never been anybody's accomplice; I should be one if I were silent now."

The terrible *Décret des Suspects* of September 17th commanded the arrest of all relations of *émigrés*, and the supervision of all aristocrats suspected of lukewarm patriotism. Domiciliary visits never ceased, and the prisons were overflowing. Committees to make lists of suspected persons and *maisons d'arrêt* to receive them were instituted in every district. All the officials about Chavaniac were Jacobins of the most pronounced description. Every individual was eager to ensure his safety by obtaining a *certificat de civisme* from his *Département.* Madame Lafayette could have a very good one; but her old aunt bravely refused to let hers be made out in too patriotic a spirit for her principles, and Adrienne would not separate their fates by having her own papers drawn up differently. Those for the rest of the household, however, were satisfactory, and

she was forced to go to Brioude with them to have them properly stamped by the Revolutionary Committee there. There is nothing more striking, or more tragically laughable, than the elaborate order with which disorder was conducted; there were as many ceremonies to be gone through then to prove yourself a Patriot—and finally to get yourself arrested—as we now suffer in having our luggage weighed at a French railway station. Civic fuss was the most prominent feature of revolutionary committees, and shows how normal they thought themselves. Perhaps it is to the credit of human nature that, to each other, at least, they had to pretend they were conscientious. The members of the Brioude Council were so ominous, even about the correct certificates from Chavaniac, that Adrienne did not dare show them either her aunt's or her own, and returned home with them unstamped and therefore invalid.

A few days later a commissioner arrived to re-examine all the papers in the house and destroy those that "were tainted with feudalism." Her excessive indifference ended by amazing even him, and yet desolation was in her heart. The persecutions were getting more frenzied. Now it was not only aristocrats that were taken, but all Patriots suspected of insufficient allegiance to Jacobinism; tradespeople, peasants, and citizens choked the prisons. On the 16th of October, the Queen had perished, followed on the 31st by the ill-starred Twenty-two. Philippe Egalité, Mayor Bailly, and Madame Roland were guillotined early in November, and the middle of the next month brought the *Noyades de Nantes*— those infamous "marriages of the Loire" which drowned aristocrats wholesale. The existing agencies no longer sufficed for these new cruelties. Not content with the *Comité du Salut Public*, the Convention

(now sitting in the deserted Palace Hall of the Tuileries) organized a "*Tribunal Extraordinaire*," or *Tribunal de la Révolution*. Fouquier-Tinville was appointed as Accuser-General, and reigned over it—the very king of confusion.

It was on November the 12th, whilst the official was still doing his work, that Madame Lafayette received definite intelligence that she would be arrested next day. It was spent in horrible suspense. The commissioners were just completing their task by piling all the papers on a cart, together with the busts of Mirabeau and the King, and carrying them off to light a bonfire in the village round which they meant to dance and hold a *fête de joie*. But the villagers refused to join them; they were too sad to dance, they said, on the day their dear lady was to be arrested.

In the evening the officer of injustice arrived. There was irony in the fact that he brought with him a detachment of National Guards. All the children met in their mother's room, and he proceeded to read aloud the Deed of Accusation. She produced her certificate. He replied that it was too old, and not legally stamped. Resistance was useless. She was to be taken to the prison at Brioude, the chief town of her district.

"Citizen," asked Anastasie, the eldest girl, "are children prevented from following their mother?" "Yes, Mademoiselle," he answered. She insisted that she was sixteen, and subject to the "Decree of the Suspected." Touched at her devotion, he tried to divert her by describing all the arrests he had made in the neighbourhood, and how he had assembled his victims in a Church close by, where they were to pass the night. On condition that Adrienne promised to meet him there the next morning, he allowed her to remain at Chavaniac. Her family were to continue

in the Château, under charge of M. Frestel. They clung round her till she stepped into the cart. Nor were they alone; as it rolled off, the air resounded with the cries of children whose parents had been torn from them.

The prison of Brioude was already overflowing, and yet cart after cart deposited fresh loads. The only space that could be allowed to Adrienne was a narrow passage which she shared with three other women. They learned to love her at once, especially a pious baker's wife, from whose simple faith Madame Lafayette drew sustenance for her spirit. Here too she found many of the aristocratic ladies whom she had not seen since the first days of the Revolution, when they had ostracised her for her Republicanism. Human nature is the only thing that never changes, though all about it suffer transformation. When they met in the prison corridors, she found these great ladies as chilly as ever in their manner to her. Tribulation produces irritation as well as endurance. The whole prison was divided into exclusive circles detesting each other, and contained as much acrimony as a provincial town. But Adrienne's sweetness won them all over, including her haughty enemies. Though they could not live without occupation, and so continued their hatreds, they were now at least united in one thing—their love of her. There was hardly one that did not lean upon her. For herself she had given up all hope of release, but she daily used her influence to try and get liberty and comforts for others.

In the wretched passage that served her for a room, five or six persons were now sleeping besides herself; there was only a screen between it and the common corridor, where shrill quarrels went on all day to crown her other miseries. Yet she added to these of her own free will, and shirked nothing that could serve a fellow-creature. She per-

suaded some infirm old women—a blind nun amongst them —to keep house in common with her, on the pretext that it lessened her expenses. They always thought that they contributed equally with herself, and never knew that she bore almost the whole cost, besides cooking for them and tending them. Delicately nurtured though she was, her health withstood all these hardships and her nerves were as calm as ever. She had to be sick-nurse too, and her patients were numerous. The fetid conditions under which she and her companions lived bred fever. On one occasion, she entreated that a sick woman, the twelfth in a tiny room, should be moved into better air. Insults and foul language were her only answer, but, on the whole, the gaolers respected her more than the other prisoners. On these they lavished their grossness. The brutalities they invented for the torture of refinement were unimaginable. But so gregarious is man, and more especially woman, by nature, that even here the prison world found distraction in an organized society of its own. Calls were interchanged between the crowd in one room and the crowd in another ; meals were shared ; topics were discussed, and friendships were formed.

From the outside, little news penetrated—enough however to bring Madame Lafayette the overwhelming intelligence that her mother, Louise de Noailles, and the old grandmother had all three been arrested. As yet they were imprisoned in their Hôtel only—a mitigated evil, for the Vicomtesse's three children were left with them, their friends dined with them, and their favourite priest, M. Carrichon, still contrived to visit them. Madame d'Ayen, bent upon discharging her debts before a worse fate befell her, was able to steal out and sell her diamonds. The jeweller who bought them gave her part of the sum down,

that she might pay her bills at once; the rest was to follow. But the next day he went to the guillotine, and she lost this one remaining source of income. They continued to live upon almost nothing—loving and praying, happy to be together. But of all this Adrienne knew little; she could only surmise, and her surmises were not hopeful.

Early in 1794, the old Aunt at Chavaniac was also accused. The crime with which they charged her was that "she was the mother of an *émigré*." To her arrest she had been indifferent; but when these words were read out to her, the word "mother" fell like a blow on her heart: "Citizen," she replied, "I have no longer the happiness of being a mother"—and she burst into tears, the tears that had not ceased to flow since she had lost her only daughter, sixteen years before. She was too old to be moved, and they left her under guard at Chavaniac.

It was a sad household there. Though the younger children could play and forget, Anastasie and M. Frestel had not a moment's peace. They found means to communicate with Madame Lafayette. Every week they sent her linen with the laundress's bill sewn on it; on the other side of the paper—which nobody thought of unfastening—they wrote a bare report of their health. It was all that it was safe to send by such precarious means, and she answered them in the same manner. Then there was the Patriot, Madame Pélatan, an old friend of the Lafayettes', who kept an inn at Brioude, and provided the prison meals; she sent them in by her daughter, a girl of thirteen years, who occasionally contrived to enter Madame Lafayette's cell and bring news of her to her family. At last the faithful Frestel found that, by using influence, he could actually smuggle her children into the prison. Anastasie was the first to go;

she rode on horseback to Brioude, spent the day with the kind innkeeper, and the night, when concealment was easier, with her mother. After this, all the children came in turn; the tutor brought the younger ones; and though there was often time for no more than an embrace, these moments were the mother's only relief.

This same winter of '94, the Revolutionary Committee again set about the sale of Lafayette's property. Adrienne sent M. Frestel to them to implore them to allow her to be present, guarded, if they thought it necessary, by a regiment of gunners. His request was insolently refused by Citizen Solon Reynaud, and he was forced to listen to a storm of abuse from him, first of Lafayette, "whose entrails he longed to tear out"; then of Adrienne, who was "the pride of the de Noailles incarnate." "As for her children," he added, "they were serpents nourished in the bosom of the Republic." He did not take into account that the poor little serpents had been given no choice, and would greatly have preferred a bosom rather less flinty. Soon after, to their great joy, Solon Reynaud was transferred to Paris and replaced by a less violent official, who was proud of his Republican simplicity, and wore a wooden spoon and fork in his button-hole as an emblem of his principles. But the Lafayettes' happiness was unfounded. Solon's presence in Paris, and his report of them to the central authorities, did them serious mischief.

The rest of the de Noailles family were attacked first. Madame d'Ayen, her daughter, and the old Maréchale were ordered to leave their Hôtel. They moved at once into lodgings, but the necessary negotiations drew public attention upon them, and before they could ask a question, they were taken to the prison of the Luxembourg. The

dread news reached Adrienne in the spring. On May the 8th, came the command that she herself was to be moved from Brioude to Paris. The captain who brought it (brother of her old friend, Montfleury, now himself in prison) was so moved that he could not read it aloud to her, but pointed to it in silence. Consternation filled the minds of all those in the cell with her, but she tried to console them by showing them that the decree was only one of transference, not a summons before the revolutionary tribunal. The captain begged to escort her himself all the way, to save her from the rough relays of guards who would otherwise accompany her. At first she refused his offer. Vague plans of escape were floating through her brain, and she feared to compromise his life and that of his brother; but conviction that any attempt at escape was impracticable and would only increase the hardships of the prison inmates, made her renounce her plans and accept his proposal.

She gained a reprieve of twenty-four hours, and used it to send an express messenger to her children. Then she mounted the stairs to the cell of the Curé of Chavaniac, now her fellow prisoner, and confessed to him, though emotion made him less fit to hear than she was to speak. Her confession over, she took leave of him and went to the barn where the nuns of Brioude were confined; she prayed with them there, and peace returned to her heart. It was now time for her to be removed to the criminal prison of the town, the only one to which M. Frestel would be admitted.

The terrible tidings had reached Chavaniac at break of day. The messenger had been retarded on his road, and the distraught children feared they would arrive too late. To save time, M. Frestel started at once with

all the jewels he could collect, in hopes that they might procure her some conveyance less painful than the revolutionary cart. Anastasie was to follow him with the children. He found the whole of Brioude—many of the Jacobins even—dumbfounded by the news of her arrest, and easily obtained another day's delay of her departure. He entered her cell; she had thrown herself upon her pallet, and heavy chains lay on the ground near her. His arrival was closely followed by that of the children. It was hastily decided that the tutor should follow her carriage as far as Melun, then seek out Morris, who had a country house there, and beg him to intervene on her behalf. Anastasie, crushed with sorrow, entreated so fervently to come too that at last her mother consented. Despair was turned to transports of joy; and, unwilling to lose a moment, she hastened to Puy to get the necessary permission for leaving the department. The other children remained with Madame Lafayette. She told them to kneel by her side, and prayed with them; as it was Ascension week, she ended with the *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, which they repeated with her. Then, after charging her boy with many commissions for her aunt, she made them both promise solemnly that, if she died, they would seek and grasp every possible chance of rejoining their father. After that, she bade them farewell.

The time had come for Anastasie's return, but she did not appear. At noon the carriage came round and her mother had to depart without her. The successor of Solon had, alas, inherited his obstinacy. He not only denied the girl a permit and assailed her with insults and coarse jokes, but refused to write to Paris on Madame Lafayette's account, or to read the letter she had written

him. She tried elsewhere with the same ill success. Dead tired and distracted with grief, she returned empty-handed to the prison, to find her mother gone and M. Frestel waiting for her. She was obliged to let him start without her and to go back to Chavaniac with the children. He had only just time. "There goes an officious fellow who wants to defend those who ought not to be defended," cried a Patriot official. "I only wish I could succeed!" he bravely replied—"and if I did, there are many here who would envy me." He was right. The sympathy he had found in Brioude had been no passing emotion.

Madame Lafayette's journey went smoothly as far as Fontainebleau. Here she met with torrents of abuse from the mob that surrounded her carriage. Not only was her own resolution failing, but that of her escort, the captain, also. She felt that if she said one word to him, he would try to escape with her and meet certain death. There was nothing for it but silence, and she kept her peace. At Melun, where there was a halt, Frestel met her and, after a short interview, proceeded to Morris' house. The rest of her time in the place she spent in writing letters to her children—the longest to Anastasie, imploring her to forgive from her heart the man who had refused her the permit.

Madame Lafayette reached Paris on May the 19th. She was stunned by the horrors which met her everywhere. The executions ordered by the Central Tribunal now numbered sixty a day, and the Carmagnole was danced through the streets by men and women drunk with their own cruelty. No one was silent; no one was at rest; and the city which had once seemed the capital of Utopia had become Pandemonium. It was small wonder that Adrienne had again to repress her guard's zeal for her

and to show him the folly of any rashness, now that it must prove futile. They parted in sorrow at the door of the prison of La Petite Force, and her last injunction to him was to take a message to the old valet, M. Beauchet, begging him to discontinue his services to her, as they would endanger him. In spite of this, his wife—the d'Ayens' former maid—came every day to the prison-wicket, to inquire if she were there. This was the only knowledge she could get to send to the poor children at Chavaniac.

They were living there in dire poverty, the devoted peasants of the District Committee bringing them their food and fuel. Till M. Frestel's return, the people of the village had provided them with money. Soon after their mother's arrival in Paris, Chavaniac was sold by the Republic, but it was arranged that they should stay on for the moment. This was the only indulgence vouchsafed them. The old aunt, it is true, was allowed to buy back her bed, but not the picture of her beloved brother, Lafayette's father, which she had kept by her bedside, ever since his death at the battle of Minden. Not content with this, they constantly disturbed her repose by threatening to arrest both her and the children.

Of all these things Adrienne knew nothing in La Petite Force. Her one wish was to communicate with her beloved ones at the Luxembourg, but she dared not attempt it. Every morning's experience—the constant disappearance of fresh faces from the prison, the roll of the tumbril wheels—initiated her into the meaning of the Terror. She waited for what would happen next. In a fortnight's time, came orders to transfer her to Le Plessis. It was her husband's old college, now turned

into a prison. When she got there, she found the walls covered with the names that school-boys had scribbled there—the school-boys who had been the comrades of his youth.

The Prisons of the Revolution

CHAPTER VII

The Prisons of the Revolution

MADAME LAFAYETTE had arrived in Paris on May the 19th. It was the eve of the *Fête de l'Etre Suprême*—that pathetic orgy of man's ineradicable instinct to bend his knee at some altar, even though he lay piety as a sacrifice upon it. Early on that May morning, the drums were heard summoning Patriots to their Sections; windows and doors were wreathed with flowers and oak-branches; young girls dressed in white, with roses in their hands, passed in procession through the streets. From North, South, East, and West, the Sections streamed forth and met in the Jardin National, or old Garden of the Tuileries, where they danced round the royal trees—the David version of a Watteau picture. Presently the trumpets sounded, and the whole Convention appeared upon the palace terrace. Robespierre, at once High Priest and Orator, made an opening speech. There was a pause; then the whole of Paris burst forth into the new hymn of their new religion.

> "Ton temple est sur les monts, dans les airs, sur les ondes;
> Tu n'as point de passé; tu n'as point d'avenir;
> Et sans les occuper, tu remplis tous les mondes,
> Qui ne peuvent te contenir."

In the silence that followed, Robespierre, in sky-blue satin coat, white and silver waistcoat, and gold shoe-buckles, stepped forward, torch in hand, and set fire to a

monster figure of Atheism standing in their midst. Wisdom appeared, in trailing robes, with one hand uplifted to heaven, a diadem of stars in the other. New flourishes of drums and trumpets—the Convention began to move, and marched out, followed by the people, in two long lines—the women on the right side, the men on the left.

This new revelation, however wildly it confused its terms, however capriciously it manufactured a god according to its needs, was yet straining after a transcendental ideal. It could not be really either true or deep. The sentimental Robespierre who, without goodness, had all its susceptibilities, was its pontiff—and even dreamed of a regenerate Paris, with marble temples and ornate altars built by himself. But such as it was, it fed the heart of the people and restored belief in immortality. Like other cults, it had its ritual, its saints and saints' days without number. It canonized all its heroes, and celebrated all their anniversaries; the bulk of its calendar has perhaps never been exceeded, unless it be by that of the Positivists. Besides these ordinary holy days, it could boast thirty-six festivals of Abstract Ideas, beginning with *l'Être Suprême*, the Human Race, and the French People; going on to the Liberty of the World, Love, Friendship, Good Faith and Immortality; and ending with Sorrow, Agriculture, Industry, the Idea of Ancestors, Posterity and Joy.

There was more than emotion in all this; it was no mere spasm of worship, but a natural reaction against the gross atheism of the last years. "I have lived," wrote the orthodox Morris, twelve months before the birthday of *l'Etre Suprême*, "to see a new religion arise. It consists in a denial of all religion, and its votaries have the superstition of not being superstitious. They have this with as

much zeal as any other sect, and are as ready to lay siege to the world in order to make proselytes."

They even had their Credo, these highly-organized Atheists, which they piously repeated. "I swear," this ran, "to have no religion but that of Nature, no temple but that of Reason, no altars but those of the Nation, no priests but our Legislators, no service but that of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." There were prayers and ceremonies too, as sensational as Robespierre's oratory, but more easily abused. Bacchantes, who called themselves Goddesses of Reason, clothed in classic robes and crowned with bay-leaves, were borne through the streets to the chief churches and there worshipped with revolutionary rites.

The first of these divinities, highly rouged and attended by tricolor priestesses, had begun her career by sailing into the Convention in a palanquin, and was there hailed as an Apocalypse. All the Députés filed out after her to Nôtre Dame and held an impromptu service in her honour. Another lady of the same race, the opera-dancer Sannier, asked David, the fanatic for freedom, to design a dress for her which would make an era in impropriety, and when he did so, she was borne in this guise to the High Altar of the Cathedral, there to be worshipped on his knees by the President of the Convention. As for the old favourites, they had become heretics and were discrowned. Demoiselle Théroigne, like many successful enthusiasts, had relapsed into a carriage and pair, and the desire for Respectability combined with Liberty. The rising feminine generation dragged her from the coach and so scourged her that her nerves never recovered, and she died in a madhouse. "The Nation," said Talleyrand, "is a *parvenue*, so of course she is insolent," and, like a *parvenue*

also, she was most insolent to the ranks from which she had risen. She required distraction, however, and Paris provided it, as usual. The stage was still "the accomplice of the Revolution," and tried at the same moment to amuse and fortify its votaries. It grew more active than ever, till, one by one, the high-spirited actors disappeared into the voracious prisons. The plays—the dead themselves—became "*suspects*"; Corneille's "*Cinna*" was being performed at one of the theatres, and a patriot lady of the audience, unable to endure hearing a law-abiding passage in it, rose in her seat and shouted "*À la Lanterne l'Auteur*," an injunction which for once was impracticable. Even the old fairy tales were *désennoblis* and deprived of their kings and their princesses; elfin princes were turned into *citoyens*, and "the Fair One with the Golden Locks" became "*La Belle aux Cheveux d'Assignats.*"

Confusion was, indeed, becoming worse confounded. Faster and faster rolled the Dance of Death through the city. The Republic was triumphant, without as well as within. In the February of 1793, England had declared war against it, but had not been able to stem its victorious course. In December, the Patriot army, with Napoleon in its Artillery, took Toulon from Hood and his men—Louis XVIII. amongst them—and all through the summer of 1794 the Jacobins' luck did not fail them. In the Convention, however, the seeing eye might long ere this have detected marks of decadence. Suspicion had entered even there, and three distinct parties had begun to show themselves. Danton, Robespierre, and Hébert had gradually divided on various pretexts, all of them resolving themselves into that greatest of all reasons—human nature, and the love of power which belongs to it. The first person attacked had been Camille Desmoulins, the Shelley of the Revolution,

too brilliant of tongue to be safe in any time of danger. As one of the old Cordeliers and the editor of their chief newspaper, he resented the rise of the new Cordeliers under the relentless Hébert; he dared to make fun of the solemn Covenanter, St. Just, and said that "he carried his head as if it were the *Saint Sacrement*"; worse still, he urged the need of a "Committee of Mercy." This was enough; Robespierre and Hébert joined in intriguing against him, and he was expelled from the Convention; nothing further as yet. It was Hébert's turn next. The Mountain suspected him of daring to lift his head against it—the Mountain crushed him. He and his followers went to their death on March the 24th, 1794. The crack that had at first seemed so small was widening, and the vessel was bound to split. Now it was Danton himself who was accused in company with Desmoulins. They were arrested, imprisoned. Camille's soul failed him when he thought of his young wife. He tried to fortify it—somewhat inadequately, so it seems to us—by reading Young's "*Night Thoughts*" and Hervey's "*Meditations*" in his cell. They had a moment's hope when it was discovered that they could not be condemned by any existing law; but new decrees were instantly invented to declare them rebels, and they died at the close of the month, taking with them the last fragments of Jacobin morality.

Robespierre, Couthon, and Fouquier-Tinville seized their opportunity and formed an undisturbed Triumvirate, of which Robespierre was the Cæsar. His popularity was at its height. He was not only the special agent of the *Être Suprême*, but the one typical Republican — the redeemer of the Revolution. Prophetesses were busy about him; one of them, Cathérine Théot, found out for certain from the Book of Revelations that

he was to regenerate the world, and Paris wept and believed. Sentimental principle is harsher than Puritanism itself, and "Rousseau's Valet," as he has been called, was never idle. Plots against the Mountain were everywhere suspected, even in the prisons themselves, and now nobody was safe. The tumbrils rolled more busily than ever, filled with a motley crew: stately *marquises* and Patriot journalists; brawling fish-women and Republican generals in uniform; opera-dancers lamenting shrilly, and emaciated dandies paying them compliments to the last; grocers and poets side by side, inspired by the same feeling; saints, resplendent in courage, consoling the terrors of girls off the streets.

Robespierre's policy was short-sighted. Suspicion so hungry could not have overlooked him, even had he been less conspicuous a mark for its arrows. Even now—early in June—there were rumours abroad. A hair-dresser, trimming his hair, had seen him read a list of a Jacobin House of Lords, with his own name at the head as Dictator. Mere gossip, it is true, but gossip of a dangerous kind.

When Madame Lafayette entered the prison of Le Plessis, in the June of 1794, she found her cousin Madame de Duras, sister-in-law of Louise de Noailles, already there. The ladies had not met since the opening days of the Revolution, when the aristocratic Madame de Duras had taken offence at Adrienne's Republican opinions. No coldness now remained, only joy that each should be able to pour out her fears and her experience to the other. They had another strong bond in their filial affection; a stronger still in the terrible fact that Madame de Duras' parents—Trojans of eighty and sixty, who had worked on their land with their peasants—had been dragged away to the Luxembourg, and there awaited their fate,

in company with Madame d'Ayen, her daughter, and her mother-in-law. The two women spent hours in scheming to communicate with them, and eased their heavy hearts by recalling memories of childhood. Of the future they spoke also. "Madame Lafayette," wrote Madame de Duras, "seemed much less well-informed than I was about what we had to fear both publicly and privately. She thought, for instance, that she could defend her husband's cause and her own before the Revolutionary Tribunal, and that there was no danger for those who had committed neither wrong nor folly towards the Republic."

They had time enough for conversation. When Adrienne arrived, there were already nineteen hundred prisoners in Le Plessis. Though it seemed to her better than her last experience, the overcrowding was terrible; twenty-five people were put into one room; but thanks to her cousin's intervention, she was allowed a closet to herself on the fifth floor. She often talked of her joy at waking and finding herself alone, though her domain was so small that she could not put a chair between her pallet and the wall. The commonest necessaries were denied them, and want taught these gently nurtured women undreamed-of resources. Their walls were never dry, their food was of the worst; candles were forbidden them, and daylight hardly entered through the heavy gratings, put up to prevent letter-throwing or intercourse with friends below. Most of the aristocrats slept upon damp stones; in a normal time they would have died of it. It is almost incredible that those who survived left prison with unimpaired health—some even the better for their confinement. One consumptive *Marquise* was mortally ill when she was first arrested, and imprisoned with more than the ordinary severity; but she came out cured—a feat which

she herself attributed to the plain fare and regular hours of prison life. Stranger still, when small-pox broke out in Le Plessis, it spread very little, in spite of the over-population, and the impossibility of getting any attendance or remedies, were it even a cup of water.

Madame Lafayette's discomfort was greatly increased by compulsory intercourse with the bad women of Paris who were lodged here, and whose shameless manners were in keeping with their ill repute. It was one of the favourite tortures of the gaolers to put these creatures, some of them girls of the town, some the coarsest fish-women, in the same rooms as the best-born aristocrats, or the most pious nuns. Madame de Duras found herself next door to the executioner's mistress, some girls from Les Halles, two or three disreputable characters, and a drunkard, who, imagining herself to be a woman of quality, burst day and night into her neighbour's room and covered her with abuse. So great was the crush of this prison population, that intercourse with friends was difficult. In Le Plessis, unlike the other houses, the men and women were kept apart till the end of the Terror—a cause for fresh separations. A relation of the de Duras' was for five hours under the same roof as his adoring daughter, but was not allowed to see her before he died ; and Councillor Réthon, of the Paris *Parlement*, could do no more than cast a farewell glance at the window belonging to his wife's room, as he went forth to the guillotine.

The gaolers were always rough, sometimes good-natured, but frequently ruffians ; one of those at Le Plessis was a September *massacreur* ; another was taken from a menagerie, where he had tamed wild beasts ; a third, in contrast to them, was a sculptor infected by the prevalent thirst for cruelty. Their power over the prisoners was almost unlimited.

They robbed them of their clothes, if they had a change of garments; they sold their property when the tumbrils bore them away. At eight o'clock in the morning, they undid the bolts of the cells—"a moment really agreeable, if one may use the expression," says Madame de Duras in her Memoirs. Then they enrolled the names of the inmates on registers. Even this function was turned into a source of discomfort. As few of them could write properly, they repeated the teasing process two or three times a day; sometimes they counted their victims in their rooms, sometimes they were made to stand like sentinels at their doors. They had to ask permission to go down the long staircase for their water; and if an official fetched them anything, his charges were preposterous. Their food was equally expensive. It was supposed to come in from neighbouring restaurants—three or four women taking their meals together; but this proved an unsafe plan for those who lived on the higher floors, as their provisions were always snatched on the way up by their fellow-sufferers below. Later on a *gamelle*, or common table, was arranged for each section of the prison: a kind of nightmare *table d'hôte*. Hairs were deliberately mixed with the food; the dirty table, devoid of any cloth, was laid with utensils that were never washed; pigs were let in to wander about the hall; knives were forbidden, since the day when a nobleman used one as a means of suicide; forks were also discovered to be possible weapons, and a wooden spoon and bowl were the only conveniences admitted. The filthiest of the prisoners were told off as waiters, and the food decreased rapidly, till there was little left to serve. Yet it was the mob and the servant class who grumbled at their fare; the nobles kept their good humour, and the officials preferred having them to deal

with. A commissioner had been listening to the complaints of a fish-woman. "Ask those *citoyennes*," replied the turnkey, pointing to some aristocrats—"they never make any fuss."

At first the prisoners stayed in their rooms for the greater part of the day; but a commissioner discovered that the want of air would rob the guillotine of its prey, and decreed a daily walk in the courtyard. The two cousins, like many other ladies, began by refusing to toil down a hundred steps and through six wickets, preceded, accompanied, and followed by gaolers, in order to gain the murky little square, shut in by boards, surrounded by gendarmes, and filled by the low faces they most wished to avoid. But they were told that resistance would result in an accusation of aristocracy, and they had to yield. Even one of the gaolers—let us hope the sculptor—was reduced to tears, as he led this purgatorial walk. One day, while they paced as usual, Madame de Duras, who was looking down, saw a paper pushed up, apparently through the ground; the young lady in front of her took advantage of an auspicious moment to pick it up unseen. It contained a petition from a poor wretch, confined underground *au secret* and deprived of all alleviations, to give him a little assistance. The girl seized another opportunity, and let some money fall through the aperture which the turnkey had forgotten to close. They could hear a faint clapping of hands, as the coins dropped; that was all they ever learned of their unknown comrade in sorrow.

The last ceremony of their day was the fastening of the bolts—far more solemn than their unfastening. It was performed at any hour between ten and midnight, by the porter, accompanied by the wicket-keepers and a huge dog. They went into each room in turn, and took par-

ticular pleasure in waking the prisoners from sleep, and in making coarse jokes to the ladies. Besides these regular functions, there was no hour of the day when they might not appear to spy upon the doings of the aristocrats, or command them to descend on some pointless errand, with no other object than to interrupt their occupations.

These were monotonous, but as manifold as they could make them. Madame de Duras said that she had always looked upon prison as a place for unbroken study, but she soon found that these inroads of the gaolers made continuous reading impossible, even for half an hour. There were few books within their reach. Adrienne got possession of a Latin Psalter, which became her great consolation, and had the additional advantage of concentrating her sad thoughts on the study of a dead language. There were living tasks, also, all round them, more fortifying, says Madame de Duras, than any other pursuit. Never was there such an arena for charity as this prison of the Revolution, and never was mercy more active. At one moment, they were nursing cases of virulent small-pox; at another, encouraging the condemned Sansculottes, and giving up their beds to people needier than themselves. There was no kindness too small for them. They cooked pancakes in secret for the fastidious, and even wrote the gaolers' letters for them.

Much time, too, especially in the early days of Le Plessis life, went in the composition of petitions to Fouquier-Tinville—"*l'Exterminateur-Général*"—for themselves and their relations. Not one of these reached him, though they would have filled volumes, for every prisoner sent more than one, and those that could not write begged the services of those that could. On one occasion, Madame Lafayette was asked to perform this favour for a peasant; but as

her handwriting was bad, she gave it to some one else to copy, who, in his turn, sent it to an imprisoned journalist, well-versed in patriotic flourishes. It was returned to Adrienne with many words erased, and copious notes on the margin. "This petition is aristocratic," they ran, "such words are not used . . . this person does not know how to draw up a petition." "We had a hearty laugh over this severe criticism of a good work," said Madame de Duras, and the sound of their laughter is more pathetic than tears. This was not the only employment left to their pens; most of the aristocratic prisoners made their wills, as a last message which might some day reach their families, even though, like Madame Lafayette, they had nothing to bequeathe but their love, their faith, and their blessing. "I forgive my enemies—if I have any—with all my heart," she writes in hers, "and my persecutors, whoever they be, even the persecutors of those I love."

But the great excitement of their dreary hours was the arrival of new prisoners, which sometimes occurred several times a day. Madame de Duras wondered how people like herself and her cousin, who had always turned away from disturbing sights, should now run to the window to be in time for the most shocking of spectacles. It was, she thought, the constant association with brutality which had corrupted them, and she had yet to learn that curiosity often wears the same face as cruelty. They had enough to look at. Now it was a crowd of poor, patois-speaking peasants from Vivarais, who were imprisoned for attending Mass, and could make no one in Le Plessis understand them; now it was a band of priests, breviary in hand, chained together by twos and threes. Or, again, it was the grand Madame de Richelieu, who was kicked upstairs by the gaoler, because she could not move quickly enough

after a three days' journey in a jolting cart, and a three nights' sojourn in infected provincial prisons. Few of these new-comers stayed long, and none knew which of them would next be taken.

For no less regular, and still more tragic than the arrival of the carts was the daily departure of the tumbrils. From twenty to sixty prisoners were despatched every morning to sit in the fatal "red velvet armchair" of the Tribunal, and thence they took their last journey. The appetite for blood had become a mania. On one occasion, a Le Plessis gaoler returned from a business visit to Fouquier-Tinville, and told the prisoners that he had found his master stretched on the ground, pale and exhausted. His children were caressing him and wiping the sweat from his brow. "I asked him his orders for to-morrow's list," said the gaoler. "'Leave me, my good fellow,' replied Fouquier, 'I'm not up to it! Ah, what a trade!' Then he added, as if instinctively, 'See my secretary; I must have sixty; it doesn't matter which; let him sort them.'"

The victims were allowed few farewells and no religious consolation, a privation the more marked that two hundred priests were actually under the Le Plessis roof. Madame de Duras used to watch the condemned travellers set forth; her demeanour was so calm that one of the gaolers complimented her upon it. "You would do very well on the guillotine," he observed. "I trust that I should," was her reply. She was fully prepared for her turn; and her one regret in thinking of it was that she should not die for the sake of religion, but because of the aristocracy she had inherited. Adrienne de Lafayette had not even such regrets as these; she only longed for the end. "The idea that one will soon be of their number makes me strong enough to endure such a sight," she exclaimed, after she had seen a

detachment of prisoners drive away. When she felt her soul failing her in this chaos of desecration, she revived her strength by whispering: "I believe in God the Father Almighty," and, refreshed by the sense of His Presence, she resumed her self-appointed tasks.

With tragedy all round and the guillotine so near them, it is incredible that these victims could amuse themselves. But here, in Le Plessis, as at Brioude, human nature asserted itself, and custom created a weird order of its own. A little society set itself up in all the prisons; in some, there were clubs and *salons*; in others, actually balls, to which none were invited but the relations of the guillotined. In the Luxembourg, which was the chief aristocratic prison, every shade of etiquette and formality of address was observed, and opera-glasses were handed round so that each noble marquis in turn might stand at the upper windows and look down on his former Hôtel, or at any rate the place were it should be. There were concerts too, and Republican choruses—not to speak of coquetries in dress, of love intrigues, and hot jealousies, that lasted till the moment of death. "Very singular to look into it," cries Carlyle, "how wherever two or three are gathered together, there are formed modes of existing together, habitudes, observances, nay gracefulnesses, joys. Citoyen Coittant will explain how our bare dinner of herbs and carrion was consumed not without politeness and *place aux dames*: . . . at what hour the Citoyennes took to their needlework; and we, yielding the chairs to them, endeavoured to talk gallantly in a standing posture, or even to sing and harp, more or less."

Once, and once only, a festival was prepared for them—a festival which for the aristocrats was worse than their daily routine. Just before Adrienne arrived, the women

of Le Plessis had been summoned to the courtyard, which was full of oak boughs, and bidden to make garlands for the *Fête de l'Être Suprême.* Madame de Duras pretended to comply, but managed to steal back to her cell. The Patriot prisoners had no such scruples. They enjoyed their work, and went so far as to propose planting a Tree of Liberty in the yard. But this request even the gaolers rejected as absurdly unfitting for a prison, and the Sans-culotte ladies were obliged to content themselves by dancing in a ring with the turnkeys. "Thus we celebrated," wrote a prisoner, "that strange festival in which Robespierre allowed us to worship a God, so long as He had not the name of one."

As suspicion grew fiercer, and plots were suspected, the horrors grew worse. Former dangers themselves seemed security compared with the dread now prevailing. Petitions were discontinued; they had become an almost certain road to destruction. Fresh reports were spread every day: one morning all the prisoners were to be shot down, standing against the wall of their courtyard, like the victims at Lyons; another time, there was to be a general massacre, like that of the September of '92. Both cousins were sick with apprehension for their parents, since escape now seemed impossible.

They had discovered that, by sending trifles to the Luxembourg, they could contrive the conveyance of open notes to their relations, and receive news from them in the same manner. Madame d'Ayen, terrified to hear of her daughter's whereabouts, could only implore her to observe every precaution. It was not safe to say more, but these messages were at least a sign to Adrienne that the beloved trio was still in existence, though the details of that existence were unknown to her.

II

The d'Ayens were living as much as possible in common with the de Mouchys, though this was a matter of some difficulty. Louise de Noailles, "*la céleste Vicomtesse*," ministered to her whole family, in a way that seemed incredible to those who saw her. Frail as she always was, she seemed to become pure spirit in her self-forgetfulness. Not a moment's leisure was allowed her. She scrubbed their cell, did all the housework, and washed their utensils, besides nursing mother and grandmother, who were both ill. By night she never lay down without tying one end of a string round her grandmother's bed and the other round her own arm, that she might wake if the invalid needed her. Every hardship found her not only calm but gay, with the sweet gaiety that distinguished her. Nevertheless, the two elder women were more sanguine than the younger, who had felt no hope from the first moment she entered the Luxembourg. She would have been content to die, had it not been for the thought of her husband, now in England, but sure to return to death ; still more, that of her three helpless children. They continued in the Hôtel de Noailles, under the care of M. Grelet, another heroic tutor of the Revolution, who had identified his life with that of the d'Ayen family. The tender mother of twenty-four years always called him her eldest son. "I was wrong to say '*the* mother and *the* children,' in my letter yesterday," she writes to him from prison—"the article 'the' gives me pain. I ought to have said, as usual (and I do say it with all my heart), '*your* mother and *your* brothers,' who are your especial charge, since you are the eldest of them. . . . Tell yourself often and often that you are my only but most bountiful consolation." They

were the last words she sent him: the answer to his patient visits each morning to the Luxembourg wicket, and his efforts to give her regular news of her children. Knowing her husband's danger as an *émigré*, she bequeathed them formally to the tutor's keeping, in a paper signed by herself and separate from her real will, which she also drew up in her cell. Her legacies, like Adrienne's, were chiefly spiritual, but she begged her husband to accept the bust of Adrian, the child that had died, together with the portraits of the others. "I entreat Madame Lafayette," ends the document, "in the name of the feeling that unites us, not to give herself up to her grief, but to preserve herself for her husband and her children. Her true happiness, her interests, and those of her dear ones, will always be mine, and will occupy me unceasingly. I implore both her and my other sisters to remember that the union which has been the sweetness and consolation of our lives, is not broken; we are only divided for a few moments."

Those moments were approaching for her and hers, though the verdict was not yet spoken. It was the turn of the de Mouchys first. On June the 26th, the old couple were transferred to the Conciergerie, which was known as "the Antechamber of Death." "At seventeen," said the Maréchal, as he bade farewell to his comrades at the Luxembourg, "I sprang to the saddle for my King; at seventy-eight, I go to the scaffold for my God. My friends, I am not unhappy." On the 27th, his wife and he were taken out to die. "The Sansculottes will devour your substance and drink your wine," shouted a Jacobin, who recognised them as their tumbril rolled past him. "God grant there may be bread for you to eat in a year's time!" the old man answered serenely, "and that you

may not be reduced to eating one another." They ended in peace. Their faithful priest, M. Carrichon, stood in the crowd, according to promise, and gave them Absolution. Their sins were not many.

On the evening of the 26th, Madame de Duras had already observed the embarrassment of the new arrivals from the Luxembourg, when she questioned them about her parents. "You will have awful news to tell me to-morrow," she said to her cousin. The next day, she read the whole tragedy in the face of Madame Lafayette. There was no softening the blow. The poor daughter shut herself into her room and remained there many days, only leaving it to minister to a woman who, in one day, had lost both her husband and her boy of sixteen.

It was not long before all her tenderness was needed for Adrienne. On July 21st, the Duchesse d'Ayen, her mother-in-law and the Vicomtesse, were transferred to the fatal Conciergerie. Their Act of Accusation was read to them in the Luxembourg; to their surprise, they were accused of conspiring with a person unknown to them, and dead at the time of the alleged plot, to assassinate the Committee of Public Safety. When they went upstairs again, they visited their great friend, the Duchess of Orléans, who occupied a cell next to theirs. So great was their self-control, that their faces told her nothing of what had happened, but they prepared her gently all that day for what was to come. In the late afternoon, when the cart arrived for them, Madame d'Ayen was reading "*The Imitation of Christ.*" She hastily wrote upon a piece of paper: "My children, courage and prayer!" She placed this as a marker in the place where she was reading—it was the beautiful chapter called "The Cross"—then she gave the book to the Duchess of Orléans, and asked her,

if she lived, to give it one day to Madame d'Ayen's children, as a token of her tenderness. But when she pronounced the names of her daughters, her calm deserted her, and her tears fell on the book. The marks were still upon it when the Duchess of Orléans fulfilled her word.

It was soon after seven, on a hot July evening, when the three ladies started from the Luxembourg. As they drove away, M. Grelet stood amongst the mob that was looking on. Louise de Noailles saw him, and managed to press his hand as she passed him, a fact not unobserved by an official who was standing close by them. When she had got into the cart, she folded her hands as a sign that she wished to pray with him, and bent her head in devotion. Presently she lifted it, raised her hand to heaven, and blessed him. Her mother, too, made him signs of benediction; but though he saw all that happened, he assumed a blank expression, so that no one could discover the object of their greetings. When the cart rolled off, he followed it at a distance, and in the narrow Rue de Condé, where the projecting houses threw a deep shade, he came so close to them that the Vicomtesse was able to look at him and raise her hand three times. He understood the sign: it meant three separate blessings for each of her children—Alexis, Alfred, and Euphémie. As the procession emerged on to the Pont Neuf, Grelet felt a hand upon him and heard words of arrest; he was pursued by the official who had observed his salutation of the Vicomtesse. In vain did he run for dear life. Just within sight of the prisoners' descent at the Conciergerie, he was caught, taken to the *préfecture*, and there shut up in a cell. There were compromising papers in his pocket, but happily the gaoler left him. In a moment, not know-

ing how else to destroy them, he had swallowed them all, only leaving his *carte de sûreté*, which he fortunately had with him. Directly after, the commissioners entered; they examined, they cross-examined, they looked at his *carte*: it was correct. After some debate, they actually set him at liberty, and he arrived at home in time to say evening prayers with the children. He allowed them that night of untroubled sleep—the last hours of childhood's ignorance they would ever know.

In the prison of the Conciergerie there was little sleep that night. The ladies were kept standing for hours in the hall, and it was nearly eleven when, faint with exhaustion, they were put into a cell already full of inmates. Fifty sous in the Vicomtesse's pocket was all the money they possessed between them, so they could buy no comforts, and a glass of currant wine was all the sustenance they could get at such a late hour. Happily Madame Lavet, one of their fellow-prisoners, was a woman who had heard of Madame Lafayette. She at once gave up her bed to the old Maréchale, and made up a pallet for the other ladies. The Vicomtesse still ministered to all. Her mother kept begging her to lie down with her and take rest against the morrow. "No, mamma; there is no good in resting before eternity," the daughter replied. She remained at a table reading the New Testament by the light of a candle. The mother, more sanguine than her child, still dreamed she would prove her innocence, and snatched a fitful sleep; but the old grandmother sat up all night in her bed, reading and re-reading her Act of Accusation, and assuring her companions that there was some mistake: she had never plotted, so she could not be condemned. At one moment, she argued; at another, she anxiously consulted her granddaughter about her cap.

She wondered if it were too much trimmed for a revolutionary tribunal. The times had changed, indeed, since the days of wreaths and roses, when her nephews were painted as aristocratic Cupids.

Next day, the Vicomtesse dressed her grandmother more carefully than usual, and acted as maid to her mother. As she was doing her hair, "Courage, mamma!" she said, "we have only an hour more." An old acquaintance, Madame de Boufflers, brought them some chocolate. Nine o'clock struck, and the guards came to fetch them amidst the tears of the prisoners in their cell, though they had known them for one night only. The Vicomtesse, with her wonted grace, thanked Madame Lavet for her kindness. "Your face is happy," she said—"you will not die," and her prophecy was fulfilled.

That same morning, at six o'clock, the tutor bade his pupils get ready for a visit to their little sister Euphémie, who was staying with a good *citoyenne* just outside Paris. He meant to tell them his terrible tidings in the wood on the way. But first he took them to the lodgings of Père Carrichon, the priest who had already given Absolution to the de Mouchys, and had solemnly promised, whatever happened, to perform the same service for the d'Ayens. M. Grelet went to warn him that the hour had come. They left the boys in one room and withdrew to another. When they returned, they found the unconscious children playing, and they could hardly restrain their tears; words failed them, and the tutor departed with his charges, in silence. The priest had once told the de Noailles ladies that if the occasion should come, they would recognise him in the crowd by his blue coat and red waistcoat. They were part of a farmer's suit of clothes which he had by him, and now put on.

There was no time to be lost; no time even for the emotion which almost choked him. When he was dressed in his disguise, he hastened to the Palais de Justice, where the trial was going on. No information to be had; no helpful face to be seen. In the anguish of his suspense, he wandered to the Faubourg St. Antoine, and fortified himself by some coffee in the house of a woman he knew there—then back to the Palais. It was now near ten o'clock: a day of storm and wind. He had not to wait long; in a few minutes the tumbrils drove up, the condemned prisoners came down the steps, and his worst fears were realized.

The old Maréchale was the first to get up into the cart, clad in the mourning she wore for her husband, her grey hair blown by the wind, her hands tied behind her with a rope. At first she looked scared, but the dignity of the supreme moment soon calmed her face. In the second tumbril came Madame d'Ayen—in a blue and white *négligé* —and her daughter, in pure white. They were both leaning forward and looking for the priest in the crowd, as eagerly as they dared, but it was in vain that he tried to make them see him—the throng was too dense. The Vicomtesse was talking with animation and trying to reassure her mother. "Look at that young one how she talks, how she excites herself!" said a woman in the mob. Still they did not see him. The tumbrils set off. In despair of their finding him in the first crush of the bystanders, he took a short cut through the hall of the Palais and caught them up. They seemed more anxious than ever; their eyes were straining for the sight of him, but all in vain. At last the heavens themselves helped him. As the wheels rolled along the Faubourg St. Antoine, a heavy thunder-shower broke. In an instant, the streets

were empty. The priest, who was in advance of the prisoners, took shelter in a doorway and, as the last drops fell, he stepped forth, almost the only person within sight. The Vicomtesse saw him now; he could read it in her face, in the way she whispered to her mother. He stood at the edge of the pavement and, as they passed, he raised his hand and distinctly murmured the words of the Absolution. He had satisfied their hearts' desire. Their faces, he says, became radiant with "the peace which passeth all understanding."

He followed them to the guillotine, and stood with the spectators, his hat slouched over his face, trembling at what he was to see, yet unable to forsake them while they lived. The Vicomtesse gave him a long look, then she bade farewell to her companions and bent her head in prayer. "Ah, that young one, how happy she seems!" cried a Sansculotte—"how she lifts her eyes to heaven! how she prays! but what good is that to her?" Then, after recollecting his principles: "Accursed scoundrels! the devil take all *ci-devants!*" he concluded. The guards had surrounded the first cart, and were helping its occupants to descend. Père Carrichon saw the old Maréchale sitting on a block of stone which lay there, with a fixed look in her eyes; her comrades were drawn up in two lines on the side of the Faubourg St. Antoine, whilst the executioner lounged close by, chewing the stalk of a full-blown rose. He did not wait long. The eldest woman's turn came third; seventh after her was Madame d'Ayen. The executioner tore her cap from her head without taking out the pin that fastened it, and for a moment, her face was contracted with pain; but its calm as quickly returned to it. Her daughter followed her, smiling, to undergo the same violence and suffering,

succeeded by the same deep tranquillity. The guillotine fell again, and, in a quarter of an hour, three generations had perished.

Next morning, Madame de Duras heard a rumour of the tragedy. A newspaper that she saw confirmed it, but did not mention the Vicomtesse. She refrained from saying anything until she knew for certain, and bribed a gaoler to find out the truth. He left her no doubt. It was enough for Madame Lafayette to look at her cousin's face; she stammered out some question, and was answered by a torrent of tears. They were more eloquent than words. For a long time, Adrienne could not believe in the full extent of her sorrow. She accepted the death of her mother and grandmother, but she could not imagine that her sister too had been taken. When the whole truth penetrated her numbed senses, she remained plunged in speechless grief. "Thank God," she wrote later to her children, "for having preserved my life, my head, my strength; do not regret having been far from me. God kept me from revolting against Him, but I should not have been able for a long time to endure even the semblance of human consolation."

There must have been torture in the thought that, had they lived a few days longer, they might have been spared altogether. The reports of Robespierre and his intention of seizing the Dictatorship had rapidly increased and assumed ominous proportions. When, after the long absence which prudence had prescribed to him, he returned to the Convention on July the 26th, he tried his last card, and began by denouncing the degenerate moderation of the whole Assembly. Where was Patriotism in this mass of corruption? It had no other home now but *his* incorruptible heart. A threatening silence met him, and he realized

that the whole House was an Opposition, and every man's hand was against him. He hastened to his Jacobin Club, and that at least was true to him; but it was powerless in face of such mighty numbers. Next day, the 27th, he sat again in the Convention, festively clad in the sky-blue coat of the *Fête de l'Etre Suprême.* Suddenly Tallien, the leader of his enemies, arose; he drew his sword, and pointing it at Robespierre, denounced him as a corrupt tyrant and a traitor to the Republic. All tongues were now loosed; the flood-gates were opened, and the tide was too strong to be resisted. Robespierre, Couthon, and St. Just were condemned to death, followed by the younger Robespierre, who refused to separate his fate from his brother's.

But the last act of the drama was not yet. Every prison refused this dangerous prey, and the Jacobins' Club seized its opportunity. They bore their Dictator in pomp to the Hôtel de Ville, and there sat in solemn Committee over his adversaries. The Convention, nothing daunted, passed a unanimous decree that the men it had condemned were outlaws, and sent out its armed forces to take them. In hurried disorder, the troops of the Club mustered also and met their brother Terrorists in the blood-stained Place de Grève. They might yet have won the day had their General Henriot been with them, instead of sitting drunk with ill-timed carousings in Robespierre's Committee-room just above. Panic-struck at his absence, they were routed in a moment. As the soldiers of the Convention rushed victoriously into the Council Chamber, Robespierre fired his pistol at himself, staining the sky-blue satin with red; his brother and Henriot leaped from the window, and the coward Couthon crept under the table. St. Just alone stood up and faced his fate. Not one of the suicides succeeded, and the victims were taken, mutilated as they were,

together with their companions. Their imprisonment, their mock trial, were the work of a few hours. On the afternoon of July the 28th, the guillotine, insensate as Nature herself, devoured her lovers with the same keen appetite she had displayed towards her foes.

Robespierre was dead! Inexpressible was the effect of the tidings upon France. It was a blow of happiness that stunned her for the moment. One man dropped down dead for joy when he heard the news. Others stared at each other in silence, not daring to break the spell by speech. The great fact penetrated the prisons with amazing speed. On the evening of the 27th, the inmates of Le Plessis were aware that some horror was imminent. Precautions were redoubled, and there was a rumour of an approaching massacre. "There was no fear of death left in us," says Madame de Duras, "but the dread of being slaughtered by inches was an extra terror." Next morning the alarm was increased by the sound of distant cannon and the haggard faces of the gaolers. But towards evening, their expressions changed; the houses opposite the prison hung out gay-coloured stuffs; and when night fell, it was known to all that Robespierre was no more.

Strange were the sounds throughout Le Plessis that night—cries of joy, clapping of hands, acclamation at the deliverance of a prisoner who had been five months *au secret*, without any man knowing of his existence. There were immediate changes, too, in the daily routine; letters and visitors were allowed, food and accommodation were better, the men and women were no longer kept apart, a few victims were even released, and some were allowed to remove to the more comfortable *maison de santé*. Madame de Duras herself might have done so, but she refused both from piety and economy; she did not wish

to oppose herself to Providence, who had placed her in Le Plessis, and she objected to the extra expense such a course would involve.

The population of the prisons changed. Terrorists came in, and aristocrats went out in increasing numbers, bearing letters and tokens from those they left behind. The Committee of Safety at last tried to realize its name, and sent commissioners to investigate the condition of the prisoners. It was rumoured that special deputies were to arrive and set everybody free, and the officers destined for Le Plessis were mentioned by name. Legendre and Bourdon de l'Oise were expected from day to day.

On October the 16th, 1794, just one year after the Queen's death, the great door opened and their coach rolled in. That day they released eighty prisoners, but neither of the cousins was amongst them. Two days later they came again, and both ladies were summoned to the *Greffe*, where the examination took place. A good many others accompanied them. When they entered, Bourdon looked at them severely. "Let the *ci-devants* go out!" he exclaimed—"it is not fitting that they should be examined before the honest Sansculottes." They withdrew, and stood waiting for three hours outside; then Madame de Duras was recalled. "Your names?" said Bourdon. She gave them. He leaped on his chair with irritation. "They are horrid names!" he shouted: "we cannot set this woman at liberty; we must speak to the Committee of Safety." After a few trifling questions, Legendre, predisposed in her favour, pointed out that her papers were satisfactory, and that she had been a "lady of Charity of St. Sulpice." The porter too, and a Sansculotte prisoner who happened to be there, sang her praises loudly. "What have you done for the Revolution?" asked the commis-

sioners. "At every time of my life," she replied, "I have done all the good I could, and I always gave money to the poor volunteers on our estate, who were leaving for the army." She was leaning easily against the deputies' table as she spoke. They found her demeanour haughty, and she did not appease them by reminding them that they owed her justice, in return for her undeserved misfortunes. When she left them, she felt that her cause was lost.

Madame Lafayette fared still worse. Legendre treated her with ignominy. "I have old scores against you," he said—"I detest yourself, your husband, and your name." "I shall always defend my husband," was her answer, "and a name is not a wrong." She replied with great firmness to his inquiries, and begged him to show her papers to the Committee of Safety. "You did not talk so humbly in the old days; you are an insolent!" was all he rejoined; and then their interview was at an end. His deeds matched his words. She was told that her husband's treachery to his country was such that she could not be released; and she stayed on in prison with several other unfortunates. She was indifferent to what became of her now—captivity had lost its sting. Her cousin's fate was different; the next morning, as she was sweeping her room, her door was opened; she heard a voice saying, "You are free," and the porter followed with her Act of Release. Freedom had come to her when the motive for it seemed gone; even the thought of a possible reunion with her son did not revive her, and the congratulations of the gaolers vexed her more than their brutality had done. She feared they might embrace her as they did most departing aristocrats; but this climax was spared her, and one of them even had the grace to restore to her a family clock which had been taken from her. In silence

she made up her scanty parcels, and took a tender leave of Madame Lafayette. Before the evening came, she was out again in Paris, dazed by the traffic and hardly knowing where to turn. She found a resting-place in the house of her mother-in-law, whence she migrated to the squalid lodgings of her mother's old maid. Here, penniless and bewildered, she passed the severe winter in a freezing garret, devoting herself to the interests of Madame Lafayette and to the practices of religion. Disguised as milliners and fish-girls, she and the few friends she still found in Paris attended secret Mass in the underground cellars, which served as catacombs to the brave priests who were in hiding.

Others, besides Madame de Duras, were busy on Adrienne's behalf. Gouverneur Morris had practically saved her life, at an earlier period, by writing to the Committee of Safety, and warning them that, if they killed Lafayette's wife, all the enemies of the Republic would rejoice and England would be justified in her slanders of Jacobinism. He had now retired from office, but his successor, Mr. Monroe, was doing his best to plead for her. He and his wife visited her in prison and tried to relieve its monotony. A much greater event was the arrival of Père Carrichon, who penetrated into her cell, disguised as a miller, and not only gave her every detail of her beloveds' last hours, but received her confession and administered the Holy Sacrament to her weary soul. She was soon transferred—first to the prison in the Rue des Amandiers, then to that of Notre Dame des Champs. The inmates of the first were nearly all of them colonial women, who looked askance upon her because of her well-known zeal for the negroes; but they were not proof against her charm, and were quickly won over. It was the same in the second house, where she found herself in a mixed company, all alike

devoted to her. There were men of every party: criminal Sansculottes; the Accuser-General of Orange, famed for his atrocities; the tutor of St. Just, glorying in his pupil.

Just as the bitter cold was beginning to tell on her bruised nerves, came her Act of Release. Her arch-enemy, Legendre had hitherto refused his signature, but Madame de Duras, conquering her repugnance, had paid him a complimentary visit at his toilet, and at last obtained his consent. On January the 22nd, 1795, Adrienne de Lafayette again found herself a free woman. But she felt as if she were dead. Even the idea of rejoining her husband, still the one thought that kept her alive, seemed blurred and confused to her. Like one in a dream, she went to thank the American Minister for his services, and begged him to try and get her a passport for herself and her family. Then she set forth for the de Ségurs, Lafayette's faithful friends and cousins, who lived just out of Paris. Her visit to them, she says, was the first thing that brought her back to life and once more humanized her. "Madame de Ségur," she wrote, "has breathed into my numb heart a great and tender interest." She began to make plans. It was decided that her boy should not accompany her and her daughters to Germany, but should be sent with M. Frestel to the United States, and there placed under Washington's care. Through the Comte de Ségur's intervention, she got a passport for the boy under the name of Motier, from Boissy d'Anglas, the member of the Committee of Safety who was most anxious to repair the evils it had wrought. George and M. Frestel were to sail in separate boats, in order to avoid suspicion, and to meet at Boston, in the house of an American friend.

Six days later, she met her boy again—not at the de Ségurs, whom she feared to compromise, but at a house in

the neighbourhood. She could not have believed, she said, that her heart could again have felt such joy. It was only for a moment. He had to depart at once, and her embrace of welcome was also one of farewell.

"My wish," she wrote to Washington, "is that my son should lead a very obscure life in America; that he should resume the studies which three years of misfortunes have interrupted, and that, far from those places which might too strongly excite or deject his spirit, he should work at making himself a capable citizen of the United States. The feelings and principles of such an one will always suit a French citizen."

There was now nothing to keep her from rejoining her children at Chavaniac. They met her on the way, in a mountain village near Clermont. The joy was almost pain. They could only express it in prayer. The priests were just beginning to emerge and once more to officiate. The day following her arrival was a Sunday, and they went all together to hear Mass, in a chapel amongst the hills. Soon after, the mother conducted her Virginie to her First Communion, and then the party journeyed slowly to Chavaniac, where the old aunt, who had survived so many generations, was anxiously expecting them. At Brioude—the town of many memories—an unexpected joy awaited them. Madame de Grammont, who had all this time remained safely in the depths of the country, had heard of her sister's release and resolved to join her. She had no money, and public conveyances were still dangerous. But she took her diamonds and, mounted on a mule, with her husband trudging by her side, she rode to Paris—the three children, whom she could not leave, slung in a pannier before her. When she reached Paris, Madame Lafayette had already left, but she pursued her to

Auvergne, and caught her up in the little provincial city.

The diamonds were sold by M. de Grammont to liquidate the remainder of the debt on Chavaniac, which the old aunt had managed to re-purchase. The whole family made it their headquarters, whilst the Lafayettes were waiting for their passport, which was delayed by endless technicalities. Adrienne used the time to save what she could of her husband's property, and to secure for herself Lagrange, which her mother's will had bequeathed to her. Never before had her business powers shone forth so brilliantly. It seemed as if necessity had endowed her with the brain of a man. She not only gained her own objects, but even managed to look after some charitable legacies left by the Duchesse d'Ayen, and all this at a time when the suspense about her passport was unbearable. Her many negotiations, too, needed her bodily strength; they frequently took her to Paris, a journey which she had to perform for the most part on foot, consoling herself, on her way, by rests in the deserted churches, now once more open to her.

The fresh split, in May, of the decadent Revolutionary party—and the fresh Proscription—made a second Terror imminent. The passport now seemed an impossibility. Her highest hope had been to reach Germany, so as to be near her husband, and then take what measures she could to share his imprisonment. But now she resolved to be content with emigration to any country she could reach, and thus ensure the safety of her family and her property. For once, events were better than her fears. The disturbances came to nothing; order re-established itself, and she and her children moved to Paris. Early in September her passport was given her, but one for America was all that

could be obtained. She decided to make a false start on the American boat and then diverge to Germany; she was to travel by Altona on the Baltic (where Madame de Tessé had made a home for the whole Montagu family), and the Grammonts were to accompany her. On September the 5th, the party set sail from Dunquerque, and left the American boat at Hamburg. In one week from their landing, they found themselves at Altona.

Emigrés and Captives

CHAPTER VIII

Emigrés and Captives

MADAME DE MONTAGU and Madame de Tessé, in their house on the Baltic, had no idea of Adrienne's fate, and their means of information were scanty and precarious. They were leading the life of *émigrés*, and the life of the *émigrés* was the queerest life imaginable—a jumble of pathos and bathos, in which comedy was not the less amusing because it was unconscious. In every Swiss and Belgian village, in every little German town, however bleak and remote, from Schleswig Holstein to Livonia—towns where nothing has ever occurred excepting the birth of metaphysicians and waiters—the French nobles tried to settle. Penniless, courageous, unpractical, and constantly chased away by the local governments, they lived from day to day, yet contrived to keep up most of their old social habits in their new surroundings. The men gave lessons, for a trifle, in languages, dancing, and mathematics ; the women earned stray shillings by coarse sewing and embroidery. But in the evening they came forth and had their *salons* as gaily as ever. Nothing destroyed their capacity for conversation, though they talked on the sourest of wines, and on meat once a week. Their powers of endurance stood every test. Louis Philippe, a lad of seventeen, wandered for months amongst the Alps, with no companion but a valet, and lived on sevenpence a day, till he eked out his income

by becoming a Professor at the College of Reichenau. We have many other glimpses into this strange migratory existence—its discomforts, and its ceremonies. Now it is the elder Madame Talleyrand, in her economical room at Brussels, where the wit threw more light than the candles; now Madame d'Escars, at Aix-la-Chapelle, with worn-out clothes and fresh spirit; or Madame de Genlis, that Venus Victrix of governesses, in her convent refuge near Geneva, receiving passionate advances from Swiss gentlemen, in the moments she could spare from painting snow mountains in water-colours, with her royal charge, little Mademoiselle d'Orléans.

Only from time to time, did these unfortunates see a newspaper and learn the catastrophes, public and private, that had befallen them. It is Madame de Genlis who records the effect produced by Robespierre's death. She was living in a *pension* full of *émigrés* at Dresden. Alone in her room, and divided, as usual, between thoughts of pedantry and of love, she was pursuing her nightly study of geology and of the harp. It was just striking twelve when a knock at her door startled her. She at once apprehended a midnight lover, prepared herself for defence, and told him to come in. Her fears seemed fulfilled when a bald old gentleman, her fellow *pensionnaire*, rushed into the apartment and folded her in his arms. She struggled in vain. "Robespierre is dead!" he cried, "therefore I kiss you, Madame!" and, propriety satisfied, she conscientiously returned his embrace.

Little Madame de Montagu, a nomad even amongst *émigrés*, had few such distractions. After her departure from Paris and her walk to the sea-coast, she travelled to London and took up her abode at Richmond, where a group of exiles were struggling for existence. Her hus-

band courageously returned to France, and left her in dusty apartments with her *grand-seigneur* father-in-law. Here she struggled on, ignorant of English, uncertain whether a beefsteak was bought at a butcher's or a grocer's—blushing to inquire; trying to make her own dresses; supporting her household upon tenpence a day, and crowning her achievements by bringing a daughter into existence. In the intervals of baby-nursing, she studied English, German, and the Lives of the Martyrs, and even found dissipation of a spiritual kind. The great excitement of the *émigré* world was the establishment of a chapel from their savings (a fund impossible to conceive), and the celebration of their maidens' first Communion there—a ceremony festively attended by all the emigrants, even by the *philosophes* amongst them, humbled by their apartments at Richmond.

Even this wretched repose was doomed to be broken by a more wretched journey to Brussels, where her husband wanted her—a journey with her baby and her father-in-law, through a country overturned by war. Romance makes good reading, but bad experience. They travelled, now on foot, now in a cart full of refugee actors, and only halted at a wayside tavern, where she got a sabre-cut in trying to separate two dangerous brawlers. In Brussels she led much the same life as at Richmond, somewhat cheered by the presence of the saintly Princesse de Chimay, with whom she shared good works and exchanged Prayer-books—an innocent attention common amongst *émigrés*. They had no other property left them to exchange. But Belgium became unsafe; the de Montagus migrated again to Aix-la-Chapelle, but were hardly settled there, when the sudden movement of the army again compelled them to flee in the first carriage at hand, whither they knew not.

It was mid-winter; they could see nothing but snow, and the cold was intense. Their fortunes led them along the bank of the Rhine and past Wesel; Madame looked longingly at the grated windows, in the vain hope of seeing the prisoner she knew to be there.

They had now resolved to go to the Hague, and thence cross the Meuse and reach a port for England. When they got to the river, it was frozen hard; no skates were to be had, the boat they were making for was about to start, and there was nothing for it but to walk, baby and all. The old father-in-law was infirm; Madame de Montagu was again expecting to be a mother. Leaning on her husband's arm, or carried by careless boors, she led her little family; and they slipped and stumbled on over miles of ice, till they at last reached the coast, faint and half frozen. Their sailing vessel landed them in safety, and this time it was at Margate that they took up their quarters, and in Margate lodgings that their third child was born. Here also she received a letter from Madame de Tessé, then at Löwenberg in Switzerland, offering a generous shelter to her and her whole family. She hesitated awhile, remembering her aunt's freethinking tendencies, but affection conquered, and she set forth to join her.

She found the strangest household. Madame de Tessé, as an *émigré*, was the same as Madame de Tessé in Paris—as eccentric and warm-hearted as ever. Her hair kept its blackness, her movements their impulsive energy. She was still a sort of Sybil, who spoke "in an impressive, dogmatic tone, with many grimaces and a very odd '*tic*,' and yet with an incomparable nobility of manners and feelings—a mixture of severe reason and visionary exaltation, as strange as it was piquant." She was positive about things and persons, and speculative about theories

and ideas; and, wherever she was, she invented outlets for her energies. Politics remained her strong point and Lafayette her political hero. As for her love of the practical, it was now amply satisfied by a virile superintendence of her house and her farm. "She imitates those hens who, as they grow old, assume the bearing and crow of the cock," some one once said of her. A needle had never been seen in her hand, and no one had ever known her to sit down excepting to read or, above all, to talk. Conversation all day was her ideal of enjoyment, and she had uprooted from Paris a witty and imperturbable old Marquis, M. de Mun, whom she always carried about as her *salon* to talk to whenever she felt inclined. Without him she could not have endured the silence of the Swiss snow mountains. Her husband was there, it is true, but nobody noticed his presence.

She and M. de Mun discussed metaphysics—her favourite topic — for some hours daily, debates from which Madame de Montagu piously retired. Madame de Tessé was still a follower of Voltaire—a fact which did not prevent her from making the sign of the cross behind her bed-curtains whenever she took a medicine. She was, as became her, the sworn foe of the clergy; but when she found a persecuted curé, she loved him with all her heart. This Church-hater even had a chaplain. She had discovered a poor priest starving in a garret, too proud to accept charity, and she could find no other way of administering it than by taking him into her household as her confessor, and attending divine service every day—the sole member of his limited congregation — so that he should not smart under the sense of a sinecure. When her niece came, her mind was at ease. She knew he would now have enough occupation.

Besides the chaplain, she supported a family of poor curés near Löwenberg, on the produce of her kitchen-garden. The ecstatic Pauline no sooner discovered this fact than she made it her duty to water the vegetables, and conscientiously inundated the nettles, which she was too aristocratic to recognise; but she was amply rewarded by a round of ecclesiastical visits to her aunt's friends. Her evenings were not so happy, for when Madame de Tessé was not conversing, she made M. de Mun read aloud. Their choice of literature was not very profane—"*Clarissa Harlowe*," "*Tristram Shandy*," the works of Madame de Genlis, and Plutarch's "*Lives*"; but they offended her transcendental niece, who preferred to read Fénelon in her room, or concentrate her attention upon knitting counterpanes for the poor.

Meanwhile, she could get no tidings of her mother and sister. Remote as she was from Paris, she allowed herself to hope, in spite of her haunting anxiety. The news of the de Mouchys' fate first broke her peace. About the same time, she heard from her father in Vaud, and decided to visit him there. She started on July the 28th, her heart unaccountably heavy. In vain did her cavalier, the son of M. de Mun, try to cheer her by making posies or improvising verses. He left her when her father met her, in a country char-à-banc, half-way to her destination. One glance at his face warned her of a tragedy. "Ask me no questions till we reach the next village," he said, as he embraced her and lifted her into the carriage. It seemed to her, as they drove along, that she was travelling in a tumbril, and "the spirit of sacrifice occupied all the forces of her bewildered soul."

One faint inquiry about Madame de Grammont she managed to make. "Of her I know nothing," the Duke

replied. They reached the village, dismounted at the inn, and entered its parlour. Here, in this Swiss tavern, the mountains and the summer glory outside, she learned the tragedy of her family. Her father was controlling his sobs. "*Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, soumettons-nous!*" she cried, when he had done; then, in the midst of her tears, she remembered the *Magnificat*, which her mother was accustomed to say upon days of sorrow, and she began to recite it, her whole heart in her voice. Soothed by prayer, she was able to continue her journey, but instead of proceeding to Vaud, her father took her back to Löwenberg.

A few weeks later, a messenger arrived from Franche-Comté, with two letters—written on cambric handkerchiefs—sewn into the lining of his vest. They were from Madame de Grammont to her sister and her father. In the midst of her mourning, she had succeeded in learning that they had survived.

"You are still alive then, my darling," she wrote to Pauline—"it would be better to say your sacrifice is not yet completed like that of our beloved martyrs. . . . There is only one thing left us now, my sister, to listen to the voice of that new Mother of the Maccabees, who exhorts us to turn our eyes to heaven . . . Your own heart will make you judge of mine, which is less horror-stricken than you would suppose. For the third time since our sorrows, Christ has visited me, and upheld me in my human agony. But Adrienne! The strength of Adrienne! It must be the same Arm that sustains her in her dungeon, for where else could she get her courage?"

There was reviving power for Madame de Montagu in the thought that her best-loved companion was still in existence. The children of the Vicomtesse de Noailles had also been saved, with their faithful tutor, and all four

had found a home with Madame de Grammont, till the Vicomte should return from America, whither he had escaped. But the thought of the dead overpowered the thought of the living, and Pauline was crushed by her griefs. At this terrible crisis, Madame de Tessé's brain was entirely merged in her heart; Voltaire was despatched to the four winds, and, with infinite trouble, she collected her priests and arranged to hold a public Mass for the dead, in the church of the neighbouring town. It was attended by the whole family, including M. de Mun, and led by the Duke, so shaken by emotion that his daughter thought he was converted. As the whole procession wound on foot through the pine-woods between Löwenberg and the chapel, the peasants of the Canton joined them, the tears coursing down their cheeks. Madame de Tessé's charity had already made her one of them.

Her ecclesiastical feats at this juncture were the more admirable that she herself was in danger because of her niece. The Government of her Canton forbade her to shelter the daughter of a proscribed family, on pain of being chased from the province, yet she persisted in her course with her usual leonine spirit. But when Madame de Montagu found it out, she would not stay, and migrated once more to Constance, where some of her husband's family had settled. Here she lived awhile, often on bread and water, absorbed in writing her mother's life, a work unfortunately lost in her many flittings. Madame de Tessé, however, was never fond of resignation. It took her a month to argue with the Canton, but at last she made them listen to reason, and her niece returned to her.

The aunt dreamed she could now farm and talk again in peace, but her hopes were vain. New cares beset

her. Her mother, the old Maréchale de Noailles, had died in debt, and one of her creditors was a rich Swiss, who dunned Madame de Tessé for large sums. Payment meant something like ruin, but that was more possible to face than dishonour, and she sold her little estate to produce the amount required. With only the smallest of incomes left her, it became impossible to continue at Löwenberg. There was nothing for it but a fresh exodus, and whither became the matter of daily discussion. Metaphysics were eclipsed by the topic of house-hunting, and M. de Mun read aloud advertisements instead of romances. At last, for reasons impossible to conceive, but connected with the general discomfort of *émigré* existence, they fixed on the shores of the Baltic, and set out with their chattels for Livonia. It was at the seaport of Altona that they alighted, escorted by their faithful de Mun, who talked and argued, undaunted by the taciturn northern town, where they resumed, as much as possible, the routine of their days in Switzerland.

Of their family they could gain little information. Lafayette, they heard, had been transferred from the custody of Prussia to that of Austria ; of Adrienne they learned nothing, except that she had been in prison—where and when they knew not. In the September of 1795, Madame de Tessé suddenly received a letter from the d'Ayens' old friend, the Princesse d'Hénin, who, though in London, was kept well posted up in Paris news. She told her correspondent that Madame Lafayette had started for Livonia. These tidings produced such agitation in Pauline that the counterpane she was knitting for her confessor dropped from her hands and, disciplined though she was, she could neither work nor read for the next few days. On the first of October, as she sat needle in hand,

the sound of a cannon from the harbour announced the arrival of a ship. Pale and trembling, she did not know whether to sit still or to go out, and she turned her eyes from the window, in her fear of disappointment. Madame de Tessé, meanwhile, slipped from the room, and almost ran to the Harbour Inn, where she knew that all newcomers stopped to make inquiries. As she entered the smoky passage, she walked straight into Adrienne's arms.

The two sisters met in silence—a silence charged with emotion too great for words. They were alone; for Madame de Tessé had retired from the room, taking her great-nieces, Anastasie and Virginie, with her. At last Madame de Montagu broke into sobs: "Did you see them?" she whispered. "I did not have that happiness," was all that her sister could reply, and by a common impulse, which needed no explanation, they knelt together and sought relief in prayer.

In spite of all there was to say and to hear, Madame Lafayette would not stay long in Altona, but, keeping her central aim in view, only waited for a passport before setting forth again for Austria. She spent the interval worthily, in bringing what news she could of their relations to the exiles in Livonia, though it was the *émigré* party that was guilty of her husband's imprisonment. Her plans for rejoining him were now matured. No French person was allowed to enter Austria, under pain of arrest, but she and her daughters would travel to Vienna under the name of the Motiers, a family from Connecticut; there she would throw herself at the Emperor's feet, and implore him, if he would not free Lafayette, to allow her to share his imprisonment.

What this imprisonment had been, it is now time to enquire. While the Terror had been raging in France,

Lafayette's fortunes had undergone many vicissitudes. In March, 1793, he had been removed to the prison at Magdeburg. His journey did no good to his oppressors; it proved a triumphal march; for, in spite of risk, people crowded to hail him on his road, and even attempted his release. Their efforts were feeble, but the movement in the fresh air and the company of his fellow-sufferers were thrilling after his solitary confinement, and, in spite of his fever, produced one of those instantaneous cures, so astonishing to read of in these days of neurotic self-preservation. At the town of Ham, where they halted, they managed to get a few minutes' conversation with a traveller on the roadside—a Moderate who had escaped from Paris and who gave them their first news of events there. When they heard of the King's death, dumbness fell upon them—above all upon Lafayette, to whom prison now seemed the least of evils.

The Allies were as fierce as the Jacobins, and subjected him and his comrades to a confinement as cruel as that of Le Plessis. After five months of this, Alexandre de Lameth, who was dying of his hardships, was released on parole, and Maubourg, whose altered face Lafayette could sometimes see through his bars, was moved to Glatz. Lafayette and Pusy were both transferred to Neisse, but the King of Prussia, foreseeing the need of soon making peace with France, and the complications that would arise from his possession of the prisoners, seized this opportunity of giving them up to Austria. The Emperor accepted the questionable gift, and sent them to the Fortress of Olmütz, where Maubourg soon joined them. Here, severity was redoubled. The gaolers were only allowed to address them by numbers that were substituted for their names, and, to increase the sense of isolation, each man's meals

were served at a different time from the other's. Lafayette's knife and fork were taken away from him, though he assured his turnkey that he "was not prudent enough to kill himself"; as for his books, they were all carried off, including one called "*L'Esprit et le Sens Commun.*" "Does Government think those qualities contraband?" he asked, with a gaiety which recalls Sir Thomas More in the Tower. Even the dungeon-damp could not extinguish the fire upon Lafayette's altar. "The popular cause is not the less sacred to me," he wrote with his toothpick—the only pen left to him—"for *that*, I would give my blood drop by drop; I should reproach myself at every instant of my life which was not devoted to that cause; but the charm is lost. . . . The injustice of the people has destroyed for me that delicious sensation of the smile of the multitude." The old American days were still present with him, and he kept July 4 solemnly in his cell, in spite of the shades of illness which were closing round him. He was never tempted to confound Religion with its professors, and his faith in freedom sustained him, even through the absence of it.

To save his life, which was despaired of, the Olmütz authorities at last allowed him to take the air, sometimes on foot, sometimes in a carriage. This was the opportunity for his friends. Dr. Bollmann, a Hanoverian, and his ardent but unknown admirer, had in vain petitioned the King of Prussia for his release, although he did not know where he was confined. Hearing there were important prisoners at Olmütz, he straightway concluded Lafayette was there, took up his abode in the neighbouring town, and made acquaintance with the prison surgeon. Perhaps it was only a German who could have acted on such metaphysical romance for a man he had never seen. One day

he began a conversation with the surgeon about the effect of the mind on the body. "You have Lafayette amongst your patients," he concluded with calm assurance—"give him this" (and he drew a paper from his pocket)—"it contains news of his friends, and will do him more good than all your medicines." His new acquaintance complied, and returned with a list of questions from Lafayette. Bollmann answered them. "These few words," he concluded, "if read with your usual warmth, may bring some consolation to a heart like yours." Lafayette understood the hint: the paper that Bollmann had appeared to take out so casually was carefully written in sympathetic ink, and, when held to a candle, proved to contain a detailed plan of escape and a request for necessary information. The prisoner wrote his "Thanks for the news," on the margin of one of the few books now allowed him. "I am trying to defend my own constitution as constantly, and apparently as unsuccessfully, as the national Constitution," he said, and added, in lime-juice, that his drive was his one chance of escape. Bollmann had meanwhile left the town to avoid suspicion, and had joined his accomplice, Hüger, the son of Lafayette's old friend in America. They discovered from the surgeon the date of Lafayette's next drive, and Bollmann cleverly spread abroad the report that it was the day of their departure for England. They made ready their saddle-horses, watched Lafayette start on his drive, accompanied by an officer, and when he dismounted for a walk, they exchanged a signal with him. He was ready for the part he had to play. Bollmann and Hüger rushed out and began the attack; the officer struggled with Lafayette and bit a piece out of his thumb, but was finally thrown down and gagged by the other two. "Get to Hoff," cried Bollmann, who had prepared relays in that

town. He said it in English, which the officer could not understand. Lafayette seized the horse that stood waiting for him, sprang into the saddle, and was away. But unfortunately, in his hurry, he had understood Bollmann to say "Get off!" and went to a wrong town. No fresh mount met him there as he expected, and he galloped on to the frontier. Here his request for relays created suspicion. He was re-arrested, a fate not sweetened by the news that his friends had shared the same fate. They were cast into a captivity which they had to endure for years. As for him, he returned to Olmütz, where his hardships were trebled. No prisoner in an operatic dungeon could fare worse. Every book was taken away from him, the straw of his bed was hardly ever changed, and his clothes were replaced by rags. Even *his* buoyant soul had to resist the impulse to pray for death. The year '95 dawned drearily, but help was at hand. Little did he dream, whilst he lay there, as near despair as he could be, that the wife he counted amongst the dead was daily drawing nearer to him.

One morning—it was the first of October—he was sitting in his cell, ill and half stupefied. To his surprise, at this unwonted hour, he heard the clanking of bolts; his door opened, and without a word of warning, as if they were spirits from a world of shadows, his wife and children entered. It must have taken hours to realize that they were not dreams—hours to regain speech. He was so changed by illness and starvation that Adrienne hardly recognised him. It was a whole day before he dared ask a question about his country. He knew that there had been a Terror, but he knew nothing more, and the names of the victims were a blank to him. It was only in the evening, when the two girls had retired, that his wife ventured to tell him that the beings whom, next to her, he loved best

in the world had perished, in company with nearly every friend he possessed. Happily, there were other and brighter things to relate: the explanation of her unaccountable arrival, and the history of her adventures in Austria which had brought it about.

Fate had been kinder than she had expected. By dint of blinding herself to difficulties, she had trodden them underfoot and achieved the impossible. Once in Vienna, she paid an unannounced visit to the Grand Chamberlain, the old Prince of Rosemberg, who had formerly had relations with the de Noailles, and, overcome by the sorrowful beauty of her countenance, he consented to introduce her and her daughters into the Imperial presence without the knowledge of the Ministers. The Emperor received her politely, and she, containing herself, asked him in calm tones to allow them to live with Lafayette. He looked at her, deeply moved: "I grant your request," he answered—"as for his liberty, I cannot give it you, for my hands are tied." When she had thanked him, she said that the wives of her husband's fellow-prisoners would envy her happiness. "They have only to do as you have done," replied the Emperor, "and I will do as I have done to you." Emboldened by his kindness, she told him she had heard that abuses were common in the German prisons, and asked leave to write to him direct from Olmütz, if she had any petition to make. He complied immediately, but added that she would find her husband well lodged and fed, that he was treated with courtesy, and that her presence would add a crowning charm to an easy existence. "When you see him, I beg you to do me justice," he concluded. Such was the ignorance of sovereigns, even after the lesson of the Revolution.

Not content with the Royal permission, and obliged to

wait for the drawing up of the official permit, she counted every moment as wasted which was not employed in trying to gain her husband's freedom. For this end, she conquered her reluctance to visit the Prime Minister, Thugut. It was an inopportune moment, for the exchange of prisoners was taking place, and the Patriot captives were just starting homewards, in return for little Madame Royale, Louis XVI.'s daughter. Adrienne was too proud to entreat liberty for a victim of loyalty, just when Austria was showing indulgence to the King's assassins—too merciful not to rejoice in the deliverance of any prisoner. She could neither put warmth into her voice, nor do anything to thaw Thugut's cold manner. "Surely," she said to him, "the Coalition lays too much stress on the importance of one man." "Too much importance!" he repeated several times, with such venom in his look and tone that she at once saw her mission was useless.

The formalities for which she had lingered had now been completed, and she and her girls set out for Olmütz. "I do not know," she wrote the evening before her arrival, "how people bear what we are going to bear to-morrow." They drove to Olmütz in an open chaise; when the postilion pointed out with his whip the distant towers of the town, Madame Lafayette shed tears of exaltation. Then, with faltering voice, she broke forth into the triumphal Song of Tobit—sung as his son and his son's bride approached their home, the home of Babylonian captivity. "Blessed be God that liveth for ever, and blessed be His kingdom," she chanted—"I will extol my God, and my soul shall praise the King of heaven."

The life they now led together might have been worse. It is true that they had an open sewer below their window; that it looked upon the court-yard where refrac-

tory soldiers were flogged; that the ladies were obliged to walk into their bedrooms beneath the crossed sabres of the soldiers; to eat with their fingers, and submit to a hundred petty regulations. Still they were all together, Lafayette's health improved every day of their presence, and they contrived enough occupations to make the time pass. He read a good deal aloud to them; and though paper and pens were denied them, Anastasie was not daunted, but made sketches of the gaoler on her thumb-nail with Lafayette's illustrious toothpick; her mother wrote Madame d'Ayen's life with the same instrument, on the margin of some engravings in a volume of Buffon; Virginie made her father's shoes, beside a suit of serge clothes which would not fasten and had to be re-adapted by Madame Lafayette; and the girls studied with their mother every morning till noon, the hour of their admittance to Lafayette's cell.

The tainted air, however, could not but end by telling upon his wife and children's strength. One of the girls fell ill of an infectious fever, but was not even allowed a separate bed from her sister; and Madame Lafayette at last broke down with blood-poisoning. In vain she wrote to the Emperor, thanking him for his past kindness, and entreating him to allow her to see a doctor in Vienna. Her friends urged him to comply, and he answered that she might only undertake the journey on condition that she did not return. There was nothing for it but to endure without a murmur. Fortunately, the daughters had inherited their parents' sweetness and vigour, and, as usual, all three were supported by Lafayette's equanimity. "He has lost none of his gentleness," wrote Adrienne to her aunt, "and is pushing to excess what you call the weakness of a great passion. You will not be surprised to hear

that he makes his friends swear not to plead for him on any occasion, except in a way that is compatible with his principles."

It was fitting that the Esquire of Freedom should at last find a champion in Freedom's fatherland. His own country deserted him, but England came to his aid. As early as 1795, General Fitzpatrick, who had been Lafayette's foe in America, but had now become his defender, proposed a motion in the House to urge the alleviation of his imprisonment. It was defeated by the eloquence of Burke, who looked upon Lafayette as the father of the hated Revolution. Meanwhile, Lally-Tollendal, his old comrade in thought, now an exile in England, undertook his cause, and wrote to the King of Prussia, demanding his deliverance. The King replied that it was no concern of his—that the Emperor of Austria was alone responsible. Lally-Tollendal addressed the Emperor, but his Imperial Majesty answered that he had nothing to do with it: it was the King of Prussia's business. Pitt, supposed to be in the pay of Austria, was next appealed to, but he shrugged his shoulders and said he knew nothing of the whole affair. At this moment, there appeared, in an English newspaper a series of forcible letters on the subject, signed by "Eleutherus" and written by Masclet, an obscure *émigré*, and a friend of Talleyrand's. Lafayette's captivity, the author maintained, was a blot on the reputation of Europe. The articles created a sensation, and the whole London world was taken up with wondering who "Eleutherus" might be, whilst the Court at Vienna fumed helplessly in its vain attempts to discover and silence the writer. He had, at any rate, succeeded in rousing the sleepy British Lion—and Sheridan, Wilberforce, Lord Lauderdale, the beautiful

Duchess of Devonshire herself, now entered the lists on behalf of Lafayette. They urged that Government should put pressure upon Austria, and the subject was once more brought forward in the House of Commons.

Burke was no longer there; since the death of his son, he had retired from public life. But Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Wilberforce, and Wyndham formed a serried legion of great spirits. Fitzpatrick again threw down the gauntlet, and opened the debate by insisting that, if England moved, the prisoner would be set at liberty. Wyndham leaped to his feet to oppose him, but Pitt begged leave to speak, and coldly urged the folly of interfering with another nation's business. Then Fox arose and let loose the forces of his tongue. It was like fire after ice to hear him—Etna spitting flame at Mont Blanc. Pitt's speech he dismissed as "the laborious efforts of a cold and sophisticated argument, which he could not resist answering, in the name of Justice, of Freedom, and of Lafayette." "I am pleading," he perorated, "in favour of a noble character, which will flourish in the annals of the world, and live in the veneration of posterity, when kings and the crowns they wear will be no more regarded than the dust to which they must return."

It was in vain that Sheridan seconded him, and flashed the nimble sword of his wit in the face of their opponents, "Lafayette," he cried, "unites Hampden's courage to Falkland's loyalty!" With unruffled manners and scholarly acrimony, Wyndham got up to reply. "He rejoiced," he said, "in the Incendiary's imprisonment, and in seeing him drink the dregs of the Revolution he had fathered." Fox exploded again, but his flame produced little but smoke; and though Wilberforce proposed an amendment, and Sheridan seconded it, it was summarily rejected, and the motion was allowed to drop.

But though the efforts of the Liberals had failed directly, indirectly they bore fruit. "The eloquence of Mr. Fox," wrote Adrienne to the Princesse d'Hénin, then in London, "has forced Mr. Pitt to deny his relations with Austria in public, and has also produced a great effect on the Court at Vienna, and on our very gaolers. This cannot be too often repeated both to Mr. Fox and to General Fitzpatrick, whose movements have been so much impeded by their delicacy, and their fear of doing harm to the cause of the prisoners. If the King of Prussia lets them go, it will be due to the measures of Mr. Fox, and it is probably because of these that M. Lafayette is still alive."

She did not exaggerate. The noise of the debate had made an echo in Europe, and beyond it, and events were further helped by the position of international affairs. The light of Napoleon had risen. Meteoric in action, as in sudden reputation, the young General had spent the winter of 1796 in crushing the Imperial troops in Italy, and was now marching across the Alps towards Austria. The Emperor could not afford to be proud, and Lafayette's friends took advantage of the moment. Madame de Tessé wrote to Fox to make fresh efforts, and Madame de Montagu to Morris to use his influence; Madame de Staël penned impassioned reams to Ministers, and overflowed with personal politics; Washington sent an impressive letter to the Emperor, in the name of Lafayette's America. Last of all, impetuous France, settling down to her Directoire and to comparative regularity, awoke to a consciousness of the prisoners' existence and a desire for their release. But it needed a strong hand to open the doors of Olmütz, and there was but one man who was equal to the task.

Napoleon Bonaparte had passed the Alps, and was

nearing the walls of Vienna, where he meant to dictate his own terms to the Emperor. In the dazzling dawn of Napoleon's career, it was impossible for any one, least of all the believing Lafayette, to see him in any other light than that of his country's deliverer. The prisoner of Olmütz was ready for more than this; he had heard rumours of his doings, and exalted him as the true Brutus, who was to succeed where he had failed and to establish the Republic of his dreams. In these early days of military prowess, Napoleon was at his best. Even in later times, he was too great a man not to be sincere, at least in the part he had allotted to himself. As he never took off the mask of the Liberator, he caught no glimpse of the Dictator's face behind it, and could accustom himself to believe that the mask was his own countenance. But his real self instinctively warned him, from the first, to beware of Lafayette as the faithful lover of liberty, and therefore the arch foe of despotism—the one man who could not, in the end, be duped by any disguise of tyranny, however classical. He feared him for the future more than he feared all the Jacobins, and, had he consulted his own wishes, would have left him safely in his cell. He was too strong a genius, however, to oppose public opinion at so early a stage in his career, and the wishes of England, America, and France were too weighty to be dismissed. Besides, he was more than compensated by the triumph of his power which the cession of the prisoners implied. If the part had to be acted, he would act it well. With resplendent graciousness, and a reluctant spirit, he stepped forward and made the release of the captives the crucial condition of the treaty. The Emperor tried subterfuge in vain; he had no choice but to submit. The Treaty of Campo Formio was signed

in the late summer, and the doors of Olmütz flew open. Lafayette was free, by the grace of Napoleon Bonaparte; it was as when Sindbad the Sailor burst the sealed casket and let loose the Genius who was destined to defy him.

It was in September, 1797, when Maubourg, De Pusy, and Lafayette, after five years' confinement, once more emerged into the open air, with Adrienne and her daughters. There were many enthusiasts for them in Germany, and, in spite of officials, their journey was diversified by ovations. They all travelled to Dresden, where the two officers were met by their wives. Then the party made its way to Hamburg, whence Lafayette sent a note to Napoleon—signed by himself and his two comrades—touching in its eloquent gratitude and boundless admiration.

He also wrote gratefully to Talleyrand, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, but, as usual, his principles clashed with his interests. The Jacobin scare and fresh proscription of the 18th of Fructidor (Sept. 4), 1796, futile as they had proved, had thoroughly disgusted him with the Government, and he could not bring himself to thank them for his deliverance. The *Directoire* took dire offence at his silence, and refused to remove from him the ban of exile. Shut out from France as he was, it became necessary for him and his family to fix on some place to live in, but their choice was so restricted that they hardly knew where to turn. Germany was shut to them; his health forbade a journey to the United States, and public events made Holland impracticable. All their ready money consisted in a gift from America, sent by Washington to Madame Lafayette, in gratitude for her husband's former services. Elijah's ravens came to them, however, in the shape of a quixotic gift of £1,000 a year from an obscure

English lady, devoted to Liberty and Lafayette. They could now choose their destination, and it was not long before they did so. Letters poured in upon them from all their friends and relations—the longest from Madame de Staël—entreating them to come back to Paris, a place impossible for them. But it was Madame de Tessé who finally made up their minds, and, before many days had elapsed, they had started for Wittmold, near Altona, where she and the de Montagus were living.

Repose

CHAPTER IX

Repose

WITH the crisis of Thermidor, the fever-strength and incoherent energy of the Convention gradually subsided, and the practical aims it had originally set itself at last came to the fore. New men began to emerge, devoid of histrionic glamour, but bent upon substantial reform, and a chastened but active Assembly proceeded to found a System of National Education—a Conservatoire of Music—an Academy of Art—finally, the "*Constitution de l'An III.*", which formed the stock-in-trade of the next administration.

It was in 1795 that the corrupt and impotent Directoire began its sway, with its five Directors; its *Conseil des Anciens*, or Second Chamber, where no man was admitted under forty; and its *Conseil des Cinq Cents*, or popular Assembly, defamed by a thousand abuses. The power of the Jacobins was rapidly, if imperceptibly, becoming attenuated, but they still had an illusive *prestige*; the general feeling was so strongly anti-aristocratic that there was no question of recalling the proscribed *émigrés*, and all the de Noailles family remained in banishment.

The Duc d'Ayen himself knew how to make the best of exile, and gathered roses whilst he might, however cosmopolitan their petals. The French Revolution made him sober; the Mass for his dear ones made him pious; the solitude of the Alps made him solitary; and he found

the company of the Princess Golovkin less cold and impenetrable than their snows. As early as 1795, he began to woo her—a courtship crowned by their marriage in 1797.

This was a terrible blow to Madame de Montagu, who was the first to receive the news. She was no longer in Altona. The whole household had moved a little way off, first to the small town of Ploen, then to Wittmold close by, where Madame de Tessé impetuously purchased a farm. She had debated about it for months with everybody in general, and M. de Mun in particular, and then bought it in a moment of rage at the universal vacillation. They went on pursuing their even and tedious course, made rather more tedious by ceremonious visits to the stiff little Duke of Oldenburg, or by tea-parties and clavecin pieces at the house of Madame la Baillive, the number of whose etiquette curtseys exhausted the energy even of Madame de Tessé. Their other variations might be reckoned as routine. Two children, a boy and girl, were born to Madame de Montagu in the years '96 and '97, occasions on which Madame de Tessé sent away the nurse, and nearly killed her niece with too much cherishing and too much conversation. There was no subject on which she was content to be ignorant, not even sick-nursing, and the speed of her metamorphosis from the *femme sage* to the *sage femme*, and back again, was almost violent. She was best in her usual rôle. There were difficulties about the private christening of the first child according to the Catholic ritual, and she overcame them with her wonted force. But when she was officiating as godmother at the font, she appeased her Voltairian conscience by interrupting the ceremony, and arguing with her chaplain that a Protestant service was as good. The baby in her arms,

the water in the font, were alike forgotten in her heat; and a return to them required all the dignity of the priest, and the conjugal calm of M. de Tessé, who had been withdrawn from his habitual seclusion to act as her fellow-sponsor. At the next christening, a year later, when a little girl was born, she was even more prominent, and, in the curé's absence and her zeal to allay the mother's anxiety, she insisted on baptizing the infant herself. But as she inundated it with eau-de-Cologne, in mistake for water, the chaplain had to perform the rite all over again, and the high priestess retired, once and for all, from sacerdotal life.

Her powers of conversation increased with use, and the discussions with her old Marquis now lasted for five hours a day. Madame de Montagu, on her part, doubled her works of charity, and added to them the supervision of the farm, in which she showed all the business talents of the d'Ayens. In spite of her nursery duties, she was up in the stables before dawn to look after the milking; she kept the accounts, managed the parish, toiled with the labourers, and danced with the harvesters, by way of a Christian dissipation. Presently, we even find her, hardly recovered from her confinement, converting the Lutheran Archbishop of Lübeck and his family to Catholicism, and organizing with them a vast financial scheme for relieving the *émigrés*, which spread its network all over Europe and became a public concern. The freethinking old de Mun said that she was the only *dévote* who gave him the least wish for salvation. Madame de Tessé was, in turn, exalted and irritated by her. At one moment, she was in ecstasies over Pauline's resemblance to Raphael's St. Michael crushing the devil with the tip of his heel; at another, she scolded her for her retinue of

lachrymose dependents, or was bored by what she called her niece's *familomanie.* The aunt had no taste for the anniversaries which Madame de Montagu kept every day in commemoration of everything she could think of, from her servants' first Communions to the sorrows of her friends. *She* had her grievances too. We almost sigh with relief when we discover that even saints can find monotony monotonous. "It is not a good thing," she writes in her journal, "for everybody to see each other every day and too closely; they risk becoming unconscious egoists, critics, rulers, or subjects, and exhaust themselves by revolving perpetually on a tiny axis. Here we only turn round ourselves, like the bears of Berne in their pit."

This narrow circle became a magic ring when the news of the Lafayettes' release reached Wittmold. The two families had contrived to exchange a few letters in the last three years, some secret, some sent open through the prison authorities, but the tidings they conveyed were but scanty. It was a warm autumn afternoon when the prisoners arrived. Madame de Tessé had offered hospitality not only to the Lafayettes, but to their companions, Maubourg, De Pusy, and their families. She went about in a state of ferment, which was sentimental when she thought of embracing her nephew, and political when she remembered that she would also be embracing her hero. The flourish of a postilion's horn announced the arrival of the party at Ploen, on the other side of the lake. Madame de Montagu and old M. de Mun ran to the shore, laid hold of a little boat, and rowed to the other side, where they fell into the arms of the travellers. They found them in the company of one of the de Lameths, who had journeyed for miles to welcome them, and now

joined the triumphal procession to the hospitable gate of the farm.

There was high festival within its walls during all the days that followed. Madame de Tessé was in her element with four good talkers in the house, all bent on discussing politics; not to speak of M. de Mun, or of herself, who sometimes held forth for fifteen minutes together, "alternately biting and grave, strange to watch and almost beautiful, amidst the fire of these debates." The Revolution, under all its aspects, was their one topic; Lafayette's comrades, de Lameth in particular, could not speak of it without passion, without a certain bitterness, less towards the Jacobins than towards the *émigrés*. Lafayette alone remained calm, and showed no vestige of rancour, either to parties or persons. "He is still at the dawn of the Revolution and at the Declaration of Rights," it was said of him; "everything else is a great misfortune, an accident; deplorable, no doubt, but no more discouraging than the history of shipwrecks to good sailors." He was as confident as ever that the Constitution of 1791 would succeed, regretted nothing that he had said or done, and was ready to begin again, directly an opportunity should present itself.

In vain did Madame de Montagu, alone of all his audience, argue that his idea of a Republican king made monarchy impossible; that the democracy he advocated must lead in the end to despotism, with lapses into anarchy in between. Enthusiasm is sublimely deaf, and he did not hear her. The poor little lady was horrified at his revolutionary ardour, at "the new constitutional faces," and at talk which seemed to her criminal. She could not always contain herself, and one day, when Lafayette was explaining the real origin of the Revolution

to a visitor at Wittmold, her control gave way; she rose and left the room. "I admire you," she burst forth as she went, "for being able to distract and console yourself, after so many tragedies, by this glib little review of the abuses of the *Ancien Régime!*" Another time, when de Lameth, whose vehemence especially irritated her, was declaiming about Liberty, tears of anger came into her eyes. One of the guests knew her taste for Scriptural precedents: "M. de Lameth is only talking like King David," he whispered to her—"Don't you remember the psalm, '*Dominus confregit in die iræ Suæ reges*'?" "Yes," replied Pauline, who knew her Latin Psalter by heart, "but don't *you* remember that David was a prophet, and that he adds: '*Judicabit in nationibus; implebit ruinas; conquissabit capita in terra multorum*'?" We may hope that this Biblical repartee may have helped to calm her feelings; at any rate, affection did so and her love for Lafayette overcame her disapproval.

"Gilbert," she wrote to Madame de Grammont, "is just as good, as caressive, as simple in his manners, and as gentle in dispute as when you knew him. He loves his children tenderly, and, in spite of his cold bearing, he is devoted to his wife. He has affable ways, a certain apathy which never deceives me, a secret desire to be within reach of action. I try as much as possible to avoid direct discussion with him about anything concerning the Revolution—the things he defends, as much as the things he condemns. I'm afraid of losing my temper, and quite as much afraid of wounding him. . . . That poor Gilbert! God preserve him from ever re-appearing on the scene."

Lafayette is not the first man whose view of himself is not the view of his family. But there was much more

peace than controversy at Wittmold, where the Lafayettes still spent most of their time, though they inhabited another house, that of Lemkuhlen, close by, which they had taken for some months. Adrienne, whose illness had broken out again, liked to sit quietly in Pauline's room upstairs and talk of old times, or make eloquent comments, which fascinated her hearers, upon the Puritanical works that her sister read out to their girls. She helped Madame de Montagu too in her vast financial scheme for the *émigrés*, and the two together often received visits from their fellow-workers, the Archbishop of Lübeck and his wife, in process of conversion to Catholicism, whose theological turn made them unwelcome interruptions in Madame de Tessé's drawing-room downstairs.

It is gayer to read of George Lafayette's return from America, and of the unexpected arrival of Lafayette's mysterious admirer, Madame de Simiane, who travelled day and night to see him, and for some time took up her abode with the Lafayettes. Next, appeared the aide-de-camp's son, the silent young De Maubourg, who promptly fell in love with Anastasie. She returned his affection, chiefly on the ground of his taciturnity, for she was almost as critical as she was retiring, and "preferred no speech at all to the slightest thing said at random"—on which excellent understanding the two young people became engaged. He had not a penny, but he believed in Fraternity, and the unworldly parents were delighted. M. de Mun held up his gloved hands in horror, and exclaimed that only Red Indians could marry in this fashion. Madame de Tessé said she had heard of nothing like it since Adam and Eve, and bought the trousseau. Mother and aunt worked indefatigably at the bride's clothes, and in May, 1798, Madame Lafayette, still too weak to

walk, was carried to the little church at Wittmold, where the long-suffering chaplain married them.

It was the last event of their sojourn in that neighbourhood. The next year, affairs in Holland having changed, there was no longer any obstacle to Lafayette's residing there, and the Republican-minded Dutch invited him to do so. His wife's failing health determined him to accept, and early in 1799, the family caravan took leave of Madame de Tessé and set forth once again—this time for Vianen, a small town near Utrecht.

Madame de Montagu followed them, and, more than this, Madame de Grammont was at last able to leave her country hiding-place and join them again. It was on Easter Eve, in this unknown Dutch hamlet, that the three sisters met once more, after eight years' separation. They had all changed, and yet remained the same. Madame Lafayette was grey-haired at forty ; and Rosalie de Grammont, at thirty-one, looked much older than Pauline de Montagu—her senior by a year—who had managed to keep her girlish looks, though Rosalie told her that "the trials of her soul were written in flame in her eyes." Both she and Adrienne possessed beauty in their different ways; Pauline's was delicate and dainty, Adrienne's on a grander scale. Madame de Grammont, on the contrary, was plain, small, rather stiff, with stern, strongly marked features—a convent countenance which did not express the tender kindness within.

Their characters, matured by experience, were as different as their appearances. Madame Lafayette was the heroine, Madame de Montagu the missionary, and Madame de Grammont the nun of the trio. A friend of all three once said of them that their mother must have been a blessed woman to have hatched a brood of angels beneath

her wings. It would have been unfair if Heaven had crowned its work by endowing them with humour, the only virtue of mind which was denied to them. Perhaps we are wrong to regret it, for it would only have complicated their simple pursuit of righteousness. It is characteristic that, at their first meeting, their loving greetings over, they should at once have set to work to analyse their spiritual errors and tell each other their faults during the eight years' lapse in their intercourse. Adrienne had far more of intellectual and social gifts than the other two, and her love for her kind applied to equals as much as to the poor and sorrowful. She was free from pedantry and well-equipped for conversation, not only in her powers of discussion, but also in the charm of her talk. Confident as she was in action, when it came to thought, she had all her mother's hesitation. Pauline blamed her for not being sufficiently "*intérieure*" and for allowing her heart to disturb her too often. "She reckons too much on happiness," she said, "or, at least, on the consolations she can get upon this earth—but her goodness is imperturbable."

Madame de Montagu herself, again like Madame d'Ayen, was for ever striving with agitation, especially in trifles. "Everything disturbs me—nothing shakes me," she once exclaimed; and it was true, in spite of snubs from Madame de Tessé, and sisterly exhortations. She was almost divine in her humility and self-effacement, but she added to them a vehemence which overwhelmed her tact and sometimes gave offence. "You exaggerate everything," said her aunt, who herself was not famous for moderation, "and give out all your impressions in their first vivacity."

Madame de Grammont tried to teach her the science of calm; it was a branch of knowledge in which she had

certainly taken her degree. "Waiting, tribulation, the everlastingness of grief, have at last made me impassive," she wrote of herself; and indeed "it seemed as if Nature had lost its empire over her body, and duty alone prevailed—even in her love to her neighbour." Nine times she had been a mother; she had mourned for eight of her children. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord," was all her comment. She was as stoically tranquil at eighty, as at thirty. In the Revolution of 1848, one of her grandchildren said to her: "But, grandmother, if they were to set up the guillotine in the Square, as they did in the Terror, surely you would be rather frightened?" "Poor darling," she answered with a smile, "that is not the question. Must we not die? The great thing is always to be ready; as for the kind of death, that is only a detail." She did not die till 1853.

Yet unbending though she was, her admiration of her sisters was almost worship. "You incite me to good," she said one day to Pauline de Montagu. "That surprises me," replied the modest little lady, "and reminds me of one of those horses that one sees here on the banks of the canals; they are lean and wretched-looking, and yet they drag great barges after them." One day she asked Madame de Grammont if she did not feel the need of a special prayer to say daily, at the hour of their mother's execution; her sister replied that she did, and all three set to work to compose a litany, in memory of their dear ones—Rosalie holding the pen and writing, now on her own inspiration, now on that of the other two. They promised one another to say it every day at the same moment, wherever they were, in church or at home. The churches were not yet acknowledged by the State, but

they were gradually opening, and the sisters found a seventh heaven in attending Mass together once again. It was more than they could have hoped.

They spent a month together under Lafayette's roof, in poverty and happiness, sitting down sixteen, to dine on nothing but *oeufs à la neige*; returning to a fireless drawing-room, and forgetting both cold and hunger in the delight of their intercourse. M. de Montagu (of whom fame took no notice, though he seems to have fulfilled all the functions of a hero) declared that he only dined once during the whole four weeks, and that was at the house of a friend. At the end of that time, the Montagus returned to Wittmold, the Grammonts to France, and Madame Lafayette to Paris. The Lafayettes were still poor, in spite of another gift from a second Donna Quixote in England, who left a large legacy "to Liberty and therefore to Lafayette." It will be remembered that before the journey to Olmütz, Adrienne had gained possession of part of the property her mother had bequeathed to her. She was now bent upon recovering the rest of her inheritance, which consisted of some money and in the estate of Lagrange; and as she was still free from the taint of proscription, she was able to go to Paris and see after things for herself.

In March, 1799, soon after her departure, came the tidings that the war with the Allies had broken out again, and that Holland was invaded by the Duke of York. Lafayette was unable to withstand his boy's entreaties to serve, and let him enlist as a private, under a feigned name, so that his parentage might gain him no unearned promotion among the liberty-loving Hollanders. Adrienne's fears, trebled by distance, might have been spared. A more impotent invasion, under a more ignorant leader,

was never heard of; the English returned crestfallen, and George without having seen action. For the rest, Lafayette's letters to his wife are at first peaceful. He celebrates his Holy-days—the American 4th of July and the Bastille 14th—by sitting under a shady tree and reading a history of the Terror, with feelings that he could not express. He writes his own *Souvenirs* of the Revolution, and his *Apologia* for 1791. Four evenings a week, he takes his young people to General van Ryssel's, where the two old soldiers play at chess, whilst the girls and boys play at "lotteries." Or he is full of plans for farming, in prospect of settling at Lagrange, and is deep in Arthur Young's book on Agriculture, lent him by the Duc de Liancourt. "Please make a fine plump farm of Lagrange," he writes to Adrienne; "for if we are destined to settle in France, I feel that my energy will spend itself in agriculture, which I am studying with all the ardour I had in youth for other occupations. . . . For my friends, I shall be full of life; for the public, I shall be like a picture in a museum, or a library-book."

Anything less like can hardly be imagined. However quiet and pastoral he thought himself, peace for more than a few weeks was impossible to him. What he called rest was only compulsory confinement to one spot, and the chains of Olmütz alone could curb his activity, which needed wider harvest-fields than those of Lagrange. "We must go on fishing," he cried, "in this swamp of the Nation for the Liberty which nobody bothers about because nobody believes in it any more than in the Philosopher's Stone."

The reorganization of the Coalition by Pitt, when the war broke out again, created fresh dangers and difficulties for Lafayette. If the army of the Allies were to come to Holland, it would be no safe country for him. For some

time these military matters kept his mind occupied. He corresponded energetically about them with Fox and Fitzpatrick, Washington and Jefferson, but his pen was not enough for him. The position of affairs made him restless, and he felt that it demanded his presence.

A more wretched apology for a Government than the *Directoire*, has perhaps never existed. It lacked purpose, it lacked unity, it lacked will, it lacked leaders, it even lacked picturesqueness, and was in fact nothing better than a despotic National Committee of contending parties, perplexed by continual intrigues, Bourbon and Jacobin. Roughly speaking, the country was divided between three factions: the *Contre-Révolutionnaires*, the Democrats, and the Constitutionalists. The *Contre-Révolutionnaires* included every sort of Royalist, from such of the reactionary old nobles as still existed, to the lazier Legitimists, who waited for a king to be wafted to them on the wings of fortune. Amongst the Democrats, even finer distinctions prevailed. There were the survivors of the Terrorists, most of them creatures of the mob, lawless but impotent; and the feebler Jacobins, who had not dared oppose Robespierre, and who now "no longer ventured to look honest folk in the eyes"; there were also the "absolute Republicans," fierce but few, who preferred "an elective despotism" to the most constitutional monarchy. "They want to be free, and they don't even know how to be just," it was said of them; and they achieved nothing more definite than an ill-managed aspiration. The third party—that of the Constitutionalists—was the smallest and the best, and consisted in a coalition between the Limited Monarchists (distinct from the Royalists) and the temperate Republicans, who wanted a Government like America's, with a President at its head.

The masses, as a whole, were *Contre-Révolutionnaires*, but rather from exhaustion and desire for repose after so many vicissitudes than from any Royalist enthusiasm. They longed to enjoy the security of *a* king, not *the* king; and even amongst these, few seem to have been eager for the Bourbons. Lafayette declares that all thinking people were really Constitutionalists, and had relapsed into Royalism from laziness and the lack of a leader. This leader, needless to say, he was longing to be. "If the prisoners of Olmütz were on the stage," he exclaimed, "the situation would be saved." He could hardly keep from starting for Paris, and indeed events seemed to favour him.

In spite of Jacobin sallies and occasional victories, the Constitutional party was prevailing, no less in the Councils, than amongst the Directors and Ministers. It was led by Director Sieyes, the incarnation of effective cleverness—the laborious workman who possessed all the tools of greatness without the greatness to handle them. Once a Jacobin amongst Jacobins, events and his own interests had trained him to adopt the more moderate views which he now represented. Barras and Carnot, his fellow Directors, seconded him; Talleyrand, Minister for Foreign Affairs, gave him the right hand of fellowship, which did not prevent his left hand from picking the Royalists' pockets. It is the only remaining sign of his priestly education that his left hand was always so scrupulously ignorant of what his right hand was doing. In the meantime, Fouché de Nantes, the only man who ever rivalled him in intrigue, was rising on the political horizon and wearing the winning colours wherever he found them.

All looked fair for Lafayette's party; he received secret entreaties from Sieyes not to leave Europe for America,

or even to go far off. It was no wonder that he was expectant, and felt that his seclusion and abstention from plotting, during the two years of his freedom, were to be rewarded. His hopes were further flattered, when Carnot sent a private ambassador with proposals for his taking office, and for his immediate return. But when the messenger refused to tell Lafayette what this would bind him to, *he* refused to join a Government without knowing where he was going, and the offers were withdrawn. As usual, the sanguine Lafayette had reckoned without his host; Sieyes, whom he imagined after his own heart, was not what he took him for. The nimble politician was eluding denunciation from the Jacobins by coquetting with them all the time that he was posing as a Constitutionalist, and he would not dream of committing himself to a definite Constitutional programme.

He was too subtle even for a wife in love with her husband. Directly Madame Lafayette heard from Holland, she hastened to visit him. She made the dangers of her husband's residence in Holland and of her return journey, in the midst of the war, the pretext of her visit. He welcomed her with effusion, and at once began talking of Lafayette. Evading all difficulties, he assured her of his friendship for her husband, of his anxiety for his safety, of his personal longing for the return of the Patriots of '89. He recommended Lafayette to take up his abode in Prussia, should the Allies come to Holland. She replied that he would prefer a prison in his own country, but had more confidence in it than to expect one. "What would you have him do in Prussia?" she asked bluntly. "What he is doing at this moment—*qu'il attende*," Sieyes blandly replied, and she could get nothing further out of him.

The Constitutional party proved almost as sterile. No doubt, the disillusioned Lafayette was right when he threw all the blame upon Sieyes. "Sieyes," he wrote a few days later, "*arriva comme la divinité du dénouement, et ne dénoua rien.*" "And yet," he added, "he is possessed by a pride which makes him wish to save France single-handed, without either the faculties or the courage for his task. . . . Besides, he is timid, peevish, and unpleasing; he can neither talk nor ride; he is an *abbé* in the full sense of the term: so that with a great intellect, considerable powers of intrigue, and good intentions, he remains below the level of his task and of public expectation, especially the expectation of Europe, where his fame has been grossly exaggerated. All the world stood on tip-toe to see him on his pedestal, and now they are astonished to find him so small."

Lafayette was not to be discouraged, but inactivity made him desperate, and his plans became almost histrionic. There was one moment when — spurred perhaps by memories of his famous white steed—this St. George of the Revolution proposed going secretly to Paris, and suddenly appearing there on horseback, to proclaim Liberty in the streets, confident that the whole of France would rally to his call. His horse was certainly the emblem of his high-mettled soul; he could not get rid of his youth, and it was with difficulty that it was proved to him that his scheme could bear no fruits, except certain death for himself. He fell back on theories. "The misfortunes of my countrymen, in public and in private, torment me day and night," he wrote. "Who will be King? Who will be President? The Duke of Brunswick might take the Presidency. But I think the Bonaparte family think of it for themselves. Sieyes, too, would have no objection

to putting on the robes of First Magistrate of the French Republic."

Lafayette himself would, of course, have preferred a Presidency, but the difficulties of election were so great that the second-best, in the form of an absolutely limited Monarchy, sometimes seemed advisable. If that were to come about, Louis XVIII. and his brothers must be set aside, on the score of treason to the Republic, and the crown offered to the young Dukes of Berri and of Angoulême, or, failing them, to the Duke of Chartres.

In the depths of his mind there yet lurked a hope that Napoleon would leave the distractions of military glory, and return to play Brutus in earnest. There were some of the Liberals who distrusted him, but most of them still saw in him an angel of light—this General who was, even at that moment, fighting with sumptuous chivalry for the deliverance of Egypt from the Turk. "He has partisans rather than friends," said Lafayette, "but everybody wants a change of administration; they are tired of the rulers that govern them and the institutions by which they are governed. . . . If a man has the strength to upset what exists, it will be enough to make him popular. . . . It is a good moment then for Bonaparte. He won't risk any personal advantage for the sake of Liberty; besides, he has proved that he can endure such sacrifice, and himself help to produce it. If ambition and glory, alike, command him to come forward in the good cause, he will do so. I feel convinced that his true prayer is for the establishment of the Republic, on the solid foundations of freedom and justice. If he wishes to be President for life, I shall only rejoice." There are seasons when the optimist sees farther than the pessimist and St. George is a better prophet than Jeremiah.

Adrienne, meanwhile, in that Paris which for her had become Gehenna, was writing him masterly summaries of political events, and signing deeds about the possession of Lagrange. At the same time, she was seeking out not only Sieyes, but Moreau, and every person she could think of who could promote her husband's interests. "It is you who bear all the burden of the day," he says—"I am satisfied with all you do, with all you say, still more with all you are."

Events came to her aid. On the 9th October (15 Vendémiaire), 1799, Napoleon, recalled by a secret letter from his brother Joseph, suddenly returned from Egypt, bent upon a greater victory than the Battle of the Nile. He allowed himself time to take breath and to settle his wife's flirtations before he took his leap in the daylight. His career since 1797 had been a triumphal procession. After the Treaty of Campo Formio, he had returned to France, where the Directors dreamed they could manage him. Barras imagined him to be his *protégé*, Sieyes his tool. But they soon grew jealous of his power, and were glad to despatch him, in 1798, to Egypt. Meanwhile, the constant defeats of the Republican army in Italy and elsewhere, proved how much his presence was needed, and the Allies were only checked in their march on France, by Masséna's victory at Zürich. These signal disasters added the last touch of unpopularity to the already tottering *Directoire*, and the country was more than ready for Napoleon's *coup d'état*. The stroke was no invention of his own; some such idea had been for months in the air, and several men, Moreau amongst them, had been proposed to execute it. But it required a greater spirit than theirs to attempt it—still more to make it succeed. Napoleon had watched from afar; he had chosen his moment superbly.

Adrienne felt that his return meant a change in Lafayette's fortunes. Directly after his arrival, she wrote to her husband, and begged him to address Napoleon in "a short, dry letter," thanking him for past services, and pledging him his attachment. Lafayette prudently sent the required note under cover to her, in case it needed correction. "Your arrival is enough in itself to fill me with joy and hope," was the driest style he could attain to in approaching the ideal head of an ideal Republic. Pisgah was in sight at last.

"Here is my letter for Bonaparte, short and rather dry, according to your advice," he wrote to his wife. "But all the letters and all the common friends in the world aren't worth half an hour's conversation. The people who are jealous of him want to make out that I shall oppose him. They would be right if he were going to oppress freedom, but I know that he could never be such a fool as to wish to be nothing more than a despot. . . . Meanwhile what ought I to do? Perhaps Napoleon wants me merely to come and unite with those who seek after good, without any public office and only as a simple citizen. I ask nothing better. As for me, indeed, my dear Adrienne, though I know you greatly fear my return to public life, I protest that I care very little for many of the joys on which I used to set most store. The needs of my soul are the same, but they have taken a graver character. I am more independent of my colleagues, and also of the public, whose suffrage I now appraise more justly. To end the Revolution for the good of my fellows, and help on the measures which will benefit them; to sanctify my regrets, to heal old wounds, and do homage to the martyrs of the good cause, would still make my heart beat for happiness. But I am thoroughly out of tune—most of all with public

affairs. I will only approach them if I'm kicked into them, and nothing, nothing in the world—I swear it to you, on my honour, on my tender love for you, on the beloved shades we mourn together—will make me renounce my plans for retirement, and for spending the rest of my life quietly at your side."

He liked to please his wife by domestic dreams, but his asseverations soon broke down. Why should he wait for his public pardon before returning to Paris? he asks at the end of his letter. Why should not Bonaparte, Moreau, and Sieyes connive at his arrival *incognito*, in order to talk matters over with him? "If we agree, so much the better; if they are not satisfied with me, I will come back here." He only required a signal to take matters into his own hands.

On the 18th of Brumaire, Napoleon stormed the *Directoire* and took it. His chief weapon was his will, and both the Councils bowed beneath it. He spoke, and the walls of Paris fell down, as at the trumpets of Jericho. The Republic was at last established, with its two provisional Consuls, Napoleon and Sieyes—a man and a shadow. The nonentity Lebrun afterwards made a third. For Lafayette, the Millennium had come, and he did not doubt that he would be especially welcome at it. He never dreamed that the victorious Joshua could do otherwise than desire the presence of Moses—a Moses still wayworn from the wilderness; and a rumour had reached him that Napoleon had already spoken of him as Generalissimo of the Forces. His own little world in Republican Utrecht, flattered him in his confidence. "Liberty, Paris, and Lafayette," was the watchword given by the Governor to the troops, on hearing of Napoleon's action. Adrienne, too, wrote inciting him to come. He needed no second

bidding. Hardly had he heard the news when he made his preparations, set out for Paris, and alighted at the house of M. de Mun, who had just been allowed to return there. The first thing he did was to send word to Napoleon of his arrival.

Lafayette and Napoleon

CHAPTER X

Lafayette and Napoleon

WHETHER Napoleon was demi-god or devil, will for ever remain a problem. Half bourgeois and half barbarian, the secrets of his nature defy analysis, and only one thing can be affirmed of him for certain—that he was a tyrant. The paternal discipline which, when he was emperor, made him plague his Chamberlain about the quantity of lemonade and the number of lettuces used in the palace—the love of power which impelled him to supervise his brothers' evening parties, as well as to conquer countries—were not likely to pass over a breach of obedience. He was furious with Lafayette for arriving without permission, and his anger was only the match which set light to the fuel. Time had not lessened his dislike and dread of the hero of '89—the friend of constitutional liberty—so much more dangerous to him than the weakened and irrational Jacobins, of whom the nation was tired. He wished to destroy the Moderate party, and the creation of Sieyes as Consul seemed likely to deal it a deathblow. The ex-Director welcomed his ally from Holland; but he was the only statesman who did so, for Napoleon had been heard to threaten Lafayette in public, and all wise men urged him to depart. Talleyrand advised him to return at once to the Dutch; but Napoleon's threats had made Lafayette obstinate, and nothing would induce him to stir. It would be amusing, he said, to be arrested

by the National Guard, and imprisoned in the Temple by the restorer of the principles of '89. Optimist as he was, he was beginning to find that glitter does not always mean gold.

Madame Lafayette hastened to visit the First Consul on her own account. He received her graciously, and told her he only regretted her husband's return, because it retarded the restoration of Lafayette's own principles, and made him (Napoleon) "take in sail." He was a masterly engineer in a *cul de sac.* "I am charmed to make your acquaintance, Madame, and you have a great deal of mind; but you do not understand me," he observed astutely—"General Lafayette, however, will understand; and as he has not been in the midst of affairs, he will feel that I can judge better than he. I therefore conjure him to avoid all publicity; I leave it to his patriotism." Madame replied that such had been her husband's intentions, but the Consul would say nothing more. He dismissed her politely, but arrived at his Council in an ill-humour, which did not make his councillors bless Lafayette.

Napoleon loved scenes, whether of rage or reconciliation; they unbent his mind and amused him like the play—a play in which he acted the best part, with the world for audience. He liked to see it gape, and the childish huffs, or monstrous scoldings in which he indulged, were all part of this entertaining farce. There was not a statesman or a courtier, however important, whom he had not treated like a child in disgrace. But with the fundamental insight which belongs to big minds, he was swift to see that scenes would not pay with Lafayette, and he never attempted them with him. Like all great men, too, he recognised what was great in others, and tried to turn it to account; yet when he could not achieve this, he could be generous

enough to go on admiring the admirable. It was so now with this chivalrous adversary. In 1800, Bonaparte had the grace to restore him to citizenship, and even to grant his prayer for the pardon of his aides-de-camp, Maubourg and de Pusy. He was still denied admittance to the Tuileries, where the Consul held court with his wife, and it was a long time before the ban was removed; but at last Bonaparte gave in, and Lafayette was received in state. Napoleon's amiability, he says, on this occasion, was like that of Frederick the Great. "I don't know what the deuce you had done to the Powers," he observed laughingly, "but they found it very hard to let you go." Then, talking of the absent Pusy, whose gratitude for his pardon Lafayette conveyed—"*On revient toujours à l'eau de la Seine*," Napoleon said, as gaily as if he had promoted the exile's return, instead of preventing it. Even then, the newcomers dared not trust their own impressions, and it was only when they looked at the faces of the Councillors of State, that they felt sure of their good luck.

After this, Lafayette saw him frequently, and an odd kind of friendship sprang up between them. It was the friendship of direct opposites—of the absolutely abstract man and the absolutely concrete. Both were sumptuously romantic—Napoleon, with the romance of materialism, Lafayette, with that of idealism. Napoleon lived in the present, and tried to make it into the future; Lafayette lived in the future, and tried to make it into the present. But their antagonism produced an especial fascination—a receding and drawing together again—which lent a freshness to their intercourse. Lafayette, who now fully recognised the tyrant in the Consul, always made some business pretext for his visits—usually a petition for a friend. He came, as he said, for three minutes, and

rarely stayed less than three hours, rooted to the spot by Napoleon's charm and frank gaiety. "I was more attracted than I ought to have been by a despot—just as I was in old days, by Frederick the Great," he wrote: "Napoleon's conversation was marked by the simplicity of genius, by depth of mind and sagacity of perception . . . I always found him ready to give himself out most expansively, about anything concerning our political interests or the glory of France, of which he talked in a way that enchanted his audience. With me, he had no other reserves than those of ambition and despotism—qualities which one *felt* in him, though he never unveiled his plans."

Napoleon, on his side, liked those whom he respected; and though he still regarded Lafayette as a political foe, he made no secret of his personal inclination for him. It was heightened by the difficulty he found in winning Lafayette; for Napoleon had love of power in all its phases, and was actuated by a feminine vanity and need of pleasing, which made him put a hundred coquetries into his intercourse with those he wished to captivate. In Lafayette's case, he had solid ground to go upon. Not that he kept his temper with him; had he not condemned all *idéologues*? "Monsieur de Lafayette," he said to Bourrienne, "is perhaps right in theory; but what on earth *is* theory?" All the same, though he shrugged his shoulders at the shadow which the dog found so alluring, he appreciated the fact that it had deliberately dropped a bone for its vision's sake—a bone which would have kept it in comfort. "*Tenez, mon cher*," he once exclaimed to Lafayette, "*your* conduct is what I really think fine." "To manage the affairs of one's country, and, in case of shipwreck, to have nothing in common with one's enemies, *voilà ce qu'il faut*." He did not only admire Lafayette—

sometimes he envied him. The supreme egoist seldom dealt in pathos, but he grew almost wistful when he talked of Lafayette's extraordinary power of making friends. "If fortune abandoned *me*," he concluded, "I should keep nobody except my wife, and perhaps my brother, Joseph." In spite, however, of all this goodwill, he never allowed Lafayette to act where his principles would take effect, and would not even have his name uttered where it was likely to provoke sentiment. The young aristocrats hated the Consul, and would not join the army; but when he was pressed to use the General's name in urging them to serve as volunteers, he refused. "There are objections to such a course," he said. His plan was to make Frenchmen forget Liberty by never mentioning her name, and he forbade Fontanes, in his speech at a public function on Washington's death, to pronounce the word "Lafayette." The champion of American Independence was not even invited to the ceremony, no more was any American. George Lafayette went, but he was coldly received, and Napoleon took care to drape Washington's bust in his own Italian banners. The enthusiasm of the mob must be for him alone.

Lafayette's pardon had restored him to his rank of Major-General, but he abstained from asking for a command, and told George (who had a commission in the Hussars) to offer himself as a volunteer, should Napoleon fail in the war of 1800, in Italy. The Consul, hearing of this, was pleased, and shortly after, asked the father for news of his son. "He is at the outposts of the Italian army," was the answer. "*Diable!*" exclaimed Bonaparte, with an expressive tone, "and he an only son!" And after the passage of the *Mincio*, when the boy had been twice wounded, "That's good," he said affectionately—

"what a charming beginning for a young man! I rejoice with you!" But he made no more solid advances.

Socially, on the contrary, he paid the General every honour, and we soon find him a welcome guest at Josephine's receptions, which he attended frequently. "The evening at the Tuileries which I think of as most memorable," he writes, "was one when, instead of approaching me, Napoleon continued to talk to an officer in a riding-coat. I learned from Madame Bonaparte that it was Moreau.[1] 'Your *salon*,' I replied to her, 'is like a volume of Plutarch.' It was then for the first time that I thanked Moreau for the interest he had taken in my imprisonment." After the storms and earthquakes of the Revolution and the big sentiments it entailed, it is refreshing to find Lafayette recording nothing more public-spirited than his own repartee to a lady. He stepped through the Tuileries drawing-room a little upborne, we may assume, by the sense that his own soul was always nobly dressed in a toga, and that he himself represented not the least Plutarchian page in the social volume.

But his most interesting conversations were held in Napoleon's *cabinet*, where the Consul was always ready to give him a vigilant attention. He only once came to him for a private concern: the redemption of his model plantation at Cayenne, for which he had been offered an insufficient indemnity. Bonaparte affably helped him to settle the affair with advantage to himself and his negroes,

[1] Moreau, like Lafayette, had been a Moderate Republican in '89, when he had taken part in affairs. Later, he had become the champion of the prisoner at Olmütz and, after Napoleon's accession to power, Moreau shared Lafayette's views of him, though he criticised him more severely. He was afterwards accused of being implicated in the Pichegru plot against Bonaparte, and was banished to Spain.

and never let Lafayette know that, at that very moment, he was working at a measure for restoring slavery, which soon after came into effect. But it was usually on behalf of the *émigrés* that the General asked for an audience, and he seldom failed to gain the pardon of his friends, including Madame de Tessé, who returned to her much-loved Paris. He rendered them other services too, and coaxed away the Consul's ill-humour against General d'Arblay, Fanny Burney's husband and Lafayette's old comrade-at-arms, who had irritated Bonaparte by a letter too full of respect for England. "All right," he said at last, "I will keep no grudge against your friend, and I'll promise to see nothing in all this but the husband of 'Cecilia.'"

Perhaps the General's success was helped by Napoleon's secret hankering after the old *noblesse*. Like most *bourgeois*, he loved aristocrats, and was nettled at their standing aloof from him. He revenged himself by listening to every scandal against them. A certain lady, a friend of the Lafayettes, had taken refuge with them, after being maligned and threatened with exile in the *Moniteur*. Lafayette complained to the Consul. "You have allowed a respectable mother of a family to be defamed," he said, "and there is not one of these aristocrats, down to Monsieur de la Harpe, whom you don't make more interesting by your punishments." Bonaparte replied that he could not answer for the folly of the newspapers; and when Lafayette pressed him to mention some periodical in which the slander could be refuted, he bade him write a book. "And what printer would dare contradict Government?" asked the intrepid General. Napoleon took refuge in an outburst against the aristocrats. "You are too good to them," he cried, "there isn't one of them but would rejoice to see you hanged." He complained bitterly of the be-

haviour of the Paris *salons* to him. "They have only the importance one gives them," answered Lafayette—"I'm astonished that generals who have conquered Europe should care a fig for the grimaces of the Faubourg St. Germain. Do be just to everybody! Besides, in the end, this crestfallen, ruined party will return to you." "I believe you are right," said the Consul, "but they make me furious. It's not only the generals; the politicians are worst of all. When I opened the door of the army to them, not a soul came; when I opened the door of the antechamber, they all flocked."

But he was flattered by the flocking, and dazzled by the flock; the grace of the *dames du Palais*, says Lafayette, overcame him. "These aristocrats are the only people who know how to serve," he remarked. One noble after another was restored by him, and he only required to be assured that they had not borne arms, before granting their pardon. This was as much policy as inclination; for having created his opportunity, and made his capital out of the dissensions of Jacobins and Royalists, he was now anxious to reconcile the two parties and merge them in his over-ruling power. "He will end by pardoning Louis XVIII. and the Comte d'Artois," some one muttered in his hearing. "And why not?" he asked good-temperedly, "they have not borne arms!"

He could be generous to the Bourbons, in action as well as in word. The terrible explosion of "the third of Nivôse" (Dec. 23, 1800)—the result of a Chouan conspiracy—left him calm and gentle. He told Lafayette one day that Louis XVIII. had written to him to disown the crime. "His letter was very nice, and so was my answer," he observed, "but he ended by asking me one thing that I can't do—to put him on the throne." Then, with great gaiety, he began telling

his companion all the absurd propositions from the Royalists, of which his wife was made the messenger, and which he made her repeat to him in the evening, to amuse him. "They promise me a statue," he said, "in which I shall be represented offering the crown to the King. I replied that I should be afraid of being shut up, by mistake, inside the pedestal." And when Lafayette said that they would be sure to draw him out again, in order to do worse to him — "You know," he resumed, "that for *us* this danger is nothing; but to restore *them* to power would be infamous cowardice on my part. You can disapprove of my government, you can consider me a despot; but they—even you—will see, one day, whether I work for myself or for posterity. . . . When all is said and done, I am master of the movement; I, whom the Revolution, you, all the patriots, have borne whither I am; and if I summoned those Royalist dogs, it would be to give you all up to their vengeance."

"These sentiments," adds Lafayette, "were so nobly expressed, he spoke so well of the glory of France, that I took his hand and told him of the pleasure he had given me." The Dictator still wore the heroic mask before himself and all who approached him, and was never so bad as not to feel the need of justifying himself. He was always jealous of Lafayette's original conception of him, and tried to regain it by a sympathetic rendering of Brutus. But sometimes—unconsciously—he half dropped the mask, as, for instance, when he defended his new Constitution of the Year Eight (1799), which established the Consulships. Bonaparte had thrown all the odium of the *coup d'état* upon Sieyes, and had then destroyed the remains of that politician's power by smothering him under big public perquisites. Lafayette taxed the Consul with his arbi-

trariness. "You dictated the Executive yourself," he exclaimed. "Well, what was I to do?" inquired the despot. "You know that Sieyes had only put shadows everywhere —shadows of legislative power, shadows of judicial power, shadows of government. There had to be substance somewhere; *ma foi*, I put it there!"

Another time, early in their intercourse, they discussed First Principles, at Joseph Bonaparte's. Lafayette was going to call one day upon Talleyrand, and met him coming out, with some one whom he took for Napoleon. It proved to be Joseph, closely resembling his brother, who greeted him warmly and invited him to stay for two days at his country-seat of Mortefontaine, where a new treaty with the United States was to be signed. The General went and found some old American friends there, not to speak of Napoleon, who sought him out as a companion. The Consul's talk was never more brilliant nor more solid. With his firm mastery of the value of time, he always plunged at once into the middle of a topic. "You must find France looking very coldly upon Liberty," he began.

LAFAYETTE: Yes, but they are in a condition to receive it.

NAPOLEON: They are much disgusted: the shopkeepers, for instance. Really, the Parisians want no more of it!"

LAFAYETTE: I was not speaking lightly, General; I am not ignorant of the effect produced by the crimes and follies which have profaned the name of Liberty. But the French have perhaps never been so fit to receive it. It is for you to give it; it is from you that it is expected.

Napoleon showed no irritation, but went on discussing the military and political prospects of France. Presently, he cross-examined Lafayette about his American cam-

paigns. "They represented the biggest interests in the universe," answered the General, "and these interests were decided by the encounters of patrols!" Soon Lafayette passed to a more dangerous topic. "I spoke to him in my turn," he continues, "about the idea of a President for life, which so many members of Congress entertained. I saw his eyes grow bright. I added that, with a national representation and suitable limitations, this idea might hold good in France. He fixed me with an attentive look. I gave some details about the American Presidency and its austere simplicity. He said with some vehemence: 'You must see that all these restrictions would never do in France.'"

It was not long before Napoleon tried to serve his own interests and win over Lafayette by offering him a post in the Government. Cabanis and other inheritors of the Girondin principles pressed him to become a Senator. He replied that, having refused the sanction of his silence to the Jacobins of '92, and then made his supreme sacrifice, he could not now think of adopting a course so adverse to his views of liberty. If he consented to take an active part in affairs, he should be obliged to adopt a course which Government would call insurrection, and the Opposition audacity. But he encouraged all his friends to play a public rôle, though he himself could not see his way to it. Talleyrand, the State Reynard, first offered him the American Ambassadorship, which domestic reasons compelled him to reject, then again urged the Senatorship. Lafayette only laughed, and repeated his reasons for abstention, but the First Consul was not so easily defeated. He was stung afresh by Lafayette's obdurate refusal to bow the knee and regard him as of old, and he sent to General Dumas, (*officier d'état-major* in the

National Guard of '89) to ask for an explanation of this disapproving attitude. "Nobody likes to pass for a tyrant," Napoleon had said—"General Lafayette seems to consider me as such." Lafayette replied that his continued silence was the highest mark of his devotion. Were the Consul a pillar of freedom, he would gladly co-operate with him, but, as it was, he could not support an arbitrary Government. "I have wished for glory and not for power!" he exclaimed. The indefatigable conqueror of the world was growing excited in his chase of this unit. His next step was to have the unit's name put down as General Council Member of the Haute Loire, but Lafayette withdrew it. "I shall always be like the child who would not say A, lest it should have to say B also," he remarked to a certain Minister, and no more overtures were made him. Later on, he accepted the title of "*Électeur départemental*," or Elector of the Electors in a Department, but that was only because his right of voting was based upon popular suffrage.

The Consul, however, did not allow his good humour to be ruffled. It had become necessary to him to see Lafayette, and he continued to discuss affairs with him. He was continuously reverting to the enmity of the aristocrats and the foreign princes. "They hate me well," he once said, "but bah! all that is nothing to their hatred for you. I have been in a position to see it; I could not have believed that human hatred could go so far. Why the devil did the Republicans think their cause was separate from yours? But now they do you complete justice. Oh, yes (significantly), complete justice." Lafayette perceived signs of a storm and, with the new diplomacy with which middle-age had endowed him, he diverted the conversation.

Another day, their talk turned on the Revolution. "General Lafayette," he said, "you have overthrown the strongest monarchy that ever existed. Look at every monarchy in Europe. Ours, in spite of its faults, was the best constituted. Yours was a fine and bold enterprise, but you made a great mistake in your scheme of revolution; you tried to preserve the old dynasty. If you had denied it all power, the Government could not have worked; yet if you had given it power, it would have used the power against yourselves. The problem was insoluble."

Lafayette replied that to find Napoleon unable to solve the problem in which *he* had failed, was enough to console his personal vanity, but that the popular desire, in which lay alike their means and their duty, was still the same. It was the desire for a Republic with a king at its head; and the Constitution of 1791, however it had failed, had been an attempt to realize this. Napoleon listened attentively to the sanguine speaker, and, strange to say, both men were equally agreed that, if the advocates of these principles had not been overwhelmed by the Jacobins of '92, the whole of Europe would have been converted to the Declaration of Rights, before ten years had passed. Bonaparte regretted that the *Assemblée Constituante* had not replaced the Three Orders by Three Chambers—one of *Propriétaires*, one of *Négociants*, and one of *Lettrés*—"a crude idea which he fulfilled in Italy, but which surprised me considerably," adds his listener. He was less astonished when Napoleon said that it was natural that each Chief should wish to make the greatest fortune possible for himself and his family, and that therefore, if Government was to be durable, it was best to have only one ruler to satisfy. "It is impossible to make a good Senate," ended

the Consul; "landowners of the old *régime* hate those of the new, and the new fortunes are all ill-gotten."

There is irony in Napoleon's impossibles. He was a supremely practical man, and the supremely practical man is one who is neither cautious nor rash; who dares attempt the impossible, when his purpose demands it and events smile upon it; who yet has the dash of pessimism, which comes of life in the present and a lucid perception of limitations. At a crisis, Napoleon became an optimist. In the daily conduct of affairs, he was three-quarters a cynic—a divinity of common sense. "Always forward and always as far as possible—that is my policy," he said one day; but then he knew *how* far, and never failed to draw the line, though the distance at which he drew it often made it invisible. "Napoleon," wrote Lafayette in later years, "united four essential qualities, in their highest degree: he could calculate, he could prepare, he could dare, he could wait." And though seeing things exactly as they are, is not seeing them as they might be, the material view was generally best suited to his purposes, and he was always able to convert his absolutism into maxims of piety.

There were moments, not so peaceful as others, when Lafayette tried to bring his casuistry home to him, and to show him his motives as they really were. "You still feel yourself too active to be a Senator?" Napoleon asked him one day, with a good-humoured laugh; he was in his most expansive mood. "It is not that," replied Lafayette, "but I think that retirement suits me best." The Consul was angry, and moved towards his inner study. "Good-bye, General Lafayette," he said with a concentrated manner—"very glad to have spent all this time with you." He was already at the door. His guest bade him good-

bye simply, but took the opportunity to add a few words of thanks for a service Napoleon had done a friend of his. Ready to be mollified, he immediately returned and resumed the conversation ; but before taking leave of him, Lafayette returned to the thorny subject. "Permit me," he said, "to talk again about a point on which I wish to leave you no false impressions. I must repeat to you that, after the events of my stormy life, after my shipwreck and all that you know of me, you ought to think it natural and fitting that I should live as a simple citizen, in the bosom of my family. I should have long since asked you to accept my military resignation, if I had not wanted my comrades-at-arms to have the precedence of me."

"You may retire from the army too," said Bonaparte graciously—"Please speak to Berthier, and he will present your demand," an injunction which the General followed, with a pension as the result.

Lafayette, the soul of energy, must have exercised the greatest self-control in sacrificing his political activity to his principles, and Napoleon was not inclined to let the matter drop. It is true that he turned a deaf ear to some slanderers who tried to persuade him that Lafayette had plotted against him. "He will never say more than what he tells me himself," he declared in a convinced tone. But his mood was not always so trustful. In March, 1802, he made his peace with the world, and signed the Treaty of Amiens. Lord Cornwallis came over on the part of England, and Lafayette hastened to visit his friendly old enemy. He met him also at Joseph Bonaparte's dinner-table. Soon after, Lafayette saw Napoleon. "I warn you," began the despot with a sneer, "that Lord Cornwallis says you are not yet cured."

LAFAYETTE (with animation): Of what? Of loving

Liberty? What could have wearied me of it? The extravagances and crimes of the Terror? They only made me hate arbitrary government the more, and bound me more closely to my principles.

NAPOLEON: Anyhow, that is Lord Cornwallis' opinion. You talked to him about our affairs, and this is what he says.

LAFAYETTE: I don't remember anything accurately. No one could be farther off than I am from seeking out an English ambassador to depreciate what is happening in my own country; but if he had asked me whether I called that Liberty, I should have replied, "No," though I would rather say it to anybody than to him.

NAPOLEON (gravely): I ought to tell you, General Lafayette—and I see it with regret—that, by your manner of expressing yourself about the actions of Government, you give the weight of your name to its enemies.

LAFAYETTE: What better can I do? I live in the country; I remain in retreat; I avoid any occasion of speaking; but every time I am asked whether your Government accords with my ideas of Liberty, I shall answer: "No"—because, when all is said and done, General, I wish to be a prudent man, but not a renegade.

NAPOLEON: And what do you mean by your eternal "arbitrary Government"? Yours was not arbitrary, I own; but then you had a resource against your enemies —the resource of riots. I was only in the *parterre* when you were on the stage; but I was watching closely.

LAFAYETTE: If you call the national insurrection of '89, a riot, well and good. But I never wished for another, and I suppressed many. My own experience is that there was not a single deviation from justice and freedom in the Revolution which did not injure the Revolution itself.

NAPOLEON: But don't you agree that, in the condition

in which I found France, I was forced into irregular measures?

LAFAYETTE: That is not the question; I am not talking of any particular moment, or that action; it is the tendency; yes, it is the tendency which I complain and grieve about.

NAPOLEON: Well, well, it is the head of the Government who has been speaking to you all this time, and, in that character, I have reason to complain of you; but when I retire into my private shell, I am pleased with you; for though you are severe in your political judgments, I always find you full of personal kindness for myself.

LAFAYETTE: I have but one wish—a free Government, and you at the head of it.

This desire of Lafayette's was one that he often reiterated. Though he had discovered the tyrant in Bonaparte, he still made the mistake of a hopeful nature, and believed that the apostate would return to his first faith. Not for a moment did he doubt that all the Consul's early impulses had been true and freedom-loving, but (so he thought) temptation had been too much for him, and power had found him a mortal, instead of an angel. And his blindness was not only that of ardour; it was the blindness of the innocent vanity which made him believe himself to be Napoleon's Mentor, the one person capable of influencing him. No doubt, personal magnetism, that unknown magic of Napoleon's which it is almost a platitude to recall, helped to foster Lafayette's illusions. They were strong enough to make him indulgent, in spite of himself, and often led him to do no more than laugh at Napoleon's flirtations with Liberty. One day the Consul began talking of his plans—then still vague—for the *Concordat*: the truce between Church and State and the restoration of

Catholicism, which took effect in April, 1802, a year or so later than this interview. "You needn't be afraid," said Napoleon—"the position of the priests will be even lower than when you left it. A bishop will feel himself deeply honoured at dining with a prefect." Lafayette interrupted him with a laugh. "Confess," he cried, "that the only object of all this scheme is to get the Sacred Coronation Vial broken upon your head." "You damn the Sacred Vial, and so do I," Napoleon answered—"but believe me, it is highly important for us, at home and abroad, to make the Pope and all his set declare against the legitimacy of the Bourbons." Two years later, his purpose was fulfilled; he was blessed, even re-married, by Mother Church; he was her Prodigal Son, who killed her fatted calves for himself. But that was as yet far off, and before then, Lafayette had many things to learn.

In the summer of 1802, the life-presidency of Napoleon was voted for and carried. The Jacobins gave their voices against, the Royalists mostly for him, partly in opposition to the Jacobins, partly because in the Consul lay their one hope of return to arbitrary government. The best men either supported him, or were silent; but Lafayette took no such course. He proclaimed openly, and wrote to Napoleon that he wished him to gain the permanent magistracy, if he gave a sufficient guarantee for the maintenance of liberty; that, in that case, he would vote *for* him, but otherwise not. He could not believe, he said, in the failure of his ideal. His letter to the Consul is hot with eloquence. "It is impossible that *you* can desire that such a Revolution, such blood-stained victories, should only end in an unconstitutional Government," he wrote. But Lafayette's impossible was Napoleon's possible; and he was not slow to prove it, though he could still be just to

his opponent. When one of his courtiers remarked that the only votes against him were due to Jacobinism, "No; some were due to enthusiasm," he replied—"Lafayette's, for instance."

This equity, however, was only the bridging of a gulf; and their separation, though hidden at first, was destined to be final. In a dangerous illness which Lafayette had about this time, Bonaparte did not once ask after him, though his brother Joseph sent every day to enquire. Worse than that, by one of those pettinesses which proclaimed him a bourgeois, the first Consul wreaked his vengeance upon George. He asked the young man's name one day upon parade, and on hearing it was Lafayette, "Ah! *his* son!" he exclaimed impatiently, and passed on. George, worthy of his father, had refused a captaincy after his Italian campaign, that he might not have an advantage over fellow-officers and friends who were older than himself. When, some years later, his name was given in to Napoleon as deserving a captaincy, he at once consented, but soon after denied that he had done so, and refused the promotion not only once, but twice. In vain did Prince Murat intercede: at the first word that he uttered in praise of the young officer, Bonaparte turned his back. As for Lafayette, he was only prevented from demanding an explanatory interview by George and his wife, who assured him they could not bear it; that he would end by creating fresh irritation, or—what was worse—by departing from his principles, for their sake. Young de Lasteyrie, his second son-in-law, also an officer, saw his military career blighted in the same manner; and for George, matters grew so disagreeable, that he was eventually forced to leave the army. The Consul did nothing by halves.

His second *coup d'état*, when—in 1804—he made himself Emperor, was a death-blow to Republicanism which shattered even Lafayette's hopes. Napoleon had stabbed Liberty in the back, and henceforward the separation between the two men was complete. Their interviews ceased, and the General's despair changed into disgust when, two months after his accession, the Emperor seized the Duc d'Enghien, and secretly made away with him, with no better motive, says Lafayette, than to frighten the princes of the blood, once for all, by making one of them a warning. Napoleon, on his side, was aware of Lafayette's contempt, and was compelled to acknowledge that he could not win him over; but he never left feelings at a standstill, and soon nursed his estrangement into suspicion. In the same year, soon after the discovery of the Chouan plot, with the arrest of its leaders, George Cadoudal and Pichegru, and of their supposed accomplice, Moreau, Napoleon was also meditating the imprisonment of Lafayette on the same grounds. "But how the devil," he asked, "shall we ever find him out in such an intricate plot as this one?" "Don't be afraid," remarked Joseph, "wherever there are aristocrats and kings, you are certain *not* to find Lafayette." The matter rested there, and when Cadoudal and Pichegru were beheaded, and Moreau banished to Spain, Lafayette was safe at Lagrange.

Courtiers and politicians, however, did their best to fan the flame against him. Lucien Bonaparte, as warm in enmity to Lafayette, as Joseph was in friendship, had spoken of him to his brother as "the man most irreconcilable with his projects"; and one of the chief Ministers had not improved matters by referring to him as "the only general whose character, in itself, was a sufficient warrant for conspiracy."

"Lafayette is my enemy, the enemy of the Government; he has only to choose his moment for playing the part of rebel," the Emperor exclaimed; and when Alexandre de Lameth once observed that he liked to feel that his enemies were His Majesty's also, "You mean Lafayette?" replied Napoleon violently, and said no more. He had for his opponent what he had for few of his allies—affection; and his wounded feelings, though they made him more bitter, also made him more generous. He pursued his vengeance no farther; and even when the General refused to congratulate him after Austerlitz, he showed no resentment, but let him live on in seclusion.

As for Lafayette, he saw at length that clay feet, even those of a god, stick fast to the earth of which they are made. He was not bitter, but stunned—as a dreamer who awakes.

He saw that what he had taken for virtue was success; what he had hailed as nobility was charm—a charm so potent that "it breathed into his military power the genius which leads men, and the magic which enchants them." He recognised, too, the colossal opportunism of the man who "reaped an endless harvest from circumstances; took possession of every adverse event with prodigious skill; gleaned advantage, at his leisure, from the old vices and new passions of all the Courts and all the factions of Europe, and, far from checking them, encouraged them and made them serve his own ends." He even made profit out of his affections. "They say," some one remarked to him, "that Paul of Russia is mad for love of you." "It is true," replied Napoleon, "and we must make hay whilst the sun shines; it will not last."

But Lafayette's regret for his fallen idol remained. "Had Bonaparte's character," he wrote in after years,

"been better regulated for the happiness of the public and of himself, he could, with less cost and greater glory, have settled the destiny of the world, and put himself at the head of the human race. Alas, for the secondary ambition which seized him—the ambition to reign over the whole of Europe! To satisfy this mania, geographically gigantic and morally evil, he has had to fritter away an immense fund of intellectual and physical force. . . . He has had to combine the splendour of a brilliant administration with the puerilities, burdens, and vexations necessary to a scheme of despotism and conquest; to keep himself for ever on guard against independence and industry; and in hostility to knowledge and the natural march of his century. He has had to seek in his own heart a justification for his contempt of his fellows, and in the heart of base men for a means to sustain it. He has had to renounce being loved and, through treachery political, philosophical and religious, he has had to renounce being believed in. . . . He has preferred the Republic to Liberty . . . and Mahomet to Jesus Christ."

Some of the feats of great men are unconscious; Napoleon never knew that he had taught Lafayette experience.

Before the End

CHAPTER XI

Before the End

THE greater part of Lafayette's property in Auvergne had been abolished or devastated, and his relations with Napoleon were conducted from his wife's estate of Lagrange—also in a condition of dilapidation, but capable of repair and only forty miles from town. Here he determined to live with his whole family and pay off his debts, and here most of his grandchildren were born. He made it his home, though Paris at first saw more of him and business frequently drew him there.

It was a consistent Paris, living on excitement and shocking him by its easily recovered levity. As early as the first years of the *Directoire*, the Parisians had thrown their sorrows to the winds. It had become the custom for the young nobles to give *Bals des Guillotinés*, to which no one was admitted but the sons and daughters of those who had been guillotined, and they pirouetted festively with bands of crape round their arms. Lafayette was even more shocked by a party of aristocrats who celebrated the anniversary of the King's death by acting a proverb: "There is no grief that endures," before a laughing audience. He himself did not shun the society of his friends. It affects us with a sense of miracle when we meet him—straight, as it were, from the Valley of Death—walking in and out of the Tuileries drawing-rooms, where he had not been since his last conference with Marie Antoinette;

or brilliant amidst the brilliant, over Joseph Bonaparte's wines; or sitting at the table of Madame de Staël and listening to the cataract of her eloquence, before Napoleon finally chased her from Swiss pillar to Alsatian post. We find him also in the house of Moreau, whom he began by heroizing and ended by hardly respecting; and in the Hôtel of his cousin, the lame Princesse de Poix, who had hidden with her son in Paris all through the Revolution, and now reopened a *salon*, where the last of the nobles met the first stars of the Empire. Like the Spirit of Freedom, he moved about amongst them, and was welcomed everywhere as the god returning to the machine.

Adrienne, meanwhile, only came to Paris to plead for certain *émigré* friends of hers with the Directors, one or two of whom she knew. And gradually, as the impossibility of holding a public office impressed itself on her husband's conscience, he too withdrew more and more into the seclusion of Lagrange. He had a remarkable faculty for happiness, and his fire was glowing enough to heat a hundred irons. One of his first occupations was to draw up a report on the state of the French peasants of 1800, as compared with their condition before '89, and he made a trip through Auvergne to collect statistics. The result filled him with thankfulness; for though the towns and their shops had suffered from panic and devastation, rural prosperity now seemed established. It was a mistake, he added, to attribute this improvement to Napoleon; it was the Revolution of '89 that set it going, and the Consul's only merit was in allowing the ball to roll. The next week he was once more absorbed in agriculture and the joys of his hearth. "I live in an agreeable place," he wrote—"My children are with me. George has married the daughter of Tracy, (an old member of the *Constituante*).

My eldest daughter has two lovely little girls. Virginie, my youngest girl, will probably be married before long. The health of my wife, though it can never be perfectly restored, is now tolerably good. You know I am not very fond of money, yet I wish I had more of it. Had I a large sum at my disposal, I might set up a delightful farm. All my studies and activities are now devoted to that sort of pursuit, but, situated as I am, it is as much as I can do to begin the spring with one plough."

His Bœotian instincts proved lasting, his plough effectual, and, by slow degrees, the neglected land recovered its former fertility. All his correspondence, with whatever statesman now becomes exclusively agrarian. "I am very glad," writes Charles Fox to him, "to see that you possess those agricultural tastes which will make the retired life you propose to lead delightful. There must be great consolation in the reflection which you, almost alone of all men, have the right to make—that you have played a part in all that has happened in France without having anything to reproach yourself with. Cruel though your imprisonment has been, you must confess that it spared you the necessity of making a choice at many a crisis when it must have been very difficult for an honest man to make one which befitted him."

Lafayette responded by pressing Fox to pay him a long visit in his country home; it would be a good opportunity, he urged, for his friend to work quietly at his "*History of the Two Last Stuarts.*" In 1802, when the Peace of Amiens brought Fox to Paris with his wife, he accepted the invitation, and came with her to Lagrange, to enchant all whom he found there. Much had happened in the twenty-six years that had passed since the two men had met, and many were the golden-tongued discussions as

of youth, "when hot thought followed hard upon hot thought," that they held in Lafayette's study, or at his simple dinner-table. One day, in George's presence, Fox, with the utmost sweetness, begged Lafayette not to grieve too much at the delay in the fulfilment of his hopes. "Liberty," cried Fox, "will be born again, but not for us; if not for George, yet surely for his children!" He grew fond of the whole family, and Madame Lafayette conquered him at once: "the woman," as he called her, "who flew to Olmütz on the wings of Love and Duty." They parted with regret. Before he went, Fox planted against the house an ivy tree, which had overrun its walls before Lafayette died.

General Fitzpatrick, the single-hearted Liberal, accompanied Fox to Lagrange. He was only one of many English politicians who, after the Peace, came over to observe for themselves the results of the Revolution. Lord Holland, Lord Lauderdale, Erskine, Adair, and the Duke of Bedford were of the number, and hastened to assure Lafayette that he was a chief object of their visit. He joined them in Paris, and spent some time with them. They were all more or less disappointed. Some had expected to find France a desert, and had to own that it was flourishing; others had hoped to see the footprint of Liberty, and were undeceived. They were depressing enough over the result of '92, and declared that, even in England, it had compromised liberty. "The first years of the Revolution," they said, "did us all a great service; its excesses ruined the good cause." Yet, until they came to France, they had believed the Terrorists to be enthusiasts carried away by their Republican principles. A little contact with the surviving Patriots soon opened their eyes. Lafayette came to see Lord Holland one morning, and

found him quite dumbfounded by a talk he had had with the *ci-devant* Jacobin, Fouché. That statesman had accused the General of a great error, and Lord Holland thought that he referred to the protest against the 10th of August. "Not at all," replied Fouché—"he should have overturned the Assembly a year earlier, re-established a Monarchy, and then seized the throne for himself." The answer, at any rate, served to destroy Lord Holland's faith in the simple Republican sincerity of Fouché and his colleagues.

Lafayette's intercourse with his friends was broken by a rude shock. A dungeon, after all, has its own peculiar safety—freedom its own accidents; and heroes, especially enthusiasts, are not exempt from them. This hero slipped on the ice and broke his thigh-bone. The doctors gave him the choice between lameness for life and a surgical treatment, terribly painful, but certain to cure. He chose the latter alternative; but the surgeon blundered, and after weeks of what even Lafayette called torture, the limb was pronounced to be worse than before. "We are on the wheel—God turn it into the Cross!" wrote his wife. Again he was told that he must be a cripple, or begin the cure again. This time, the lameness seemed the least of the two evils, and he let matters rest where they were. Martyrs choose their suffering and they seldom make good invalids, but Lafayette remained as sweet and serene as in health, and he only made one comment on the doctor's mistake: "At any rate," he said, "Humanity will benefit by the experiment; I am glad of it."

His confinement to the house was cheered by the affection of friends and the visits of relations. Most of these had gone back to Paris. Madame de Tessé settled first in the Rue d'Anjou St. Honoré, then in the Rue Verte;

the Duc de Noailles and his second wife were not far off, in the Rue Royale. Madame de Montagu took tea with him here once a week. She and her husband had obtained their *radiation* from the list of *émigrés* with great difficulty, and had travelled to Paris to procure it, under a false name and with very few pence in their pockets. At first they had lodged in a garret under the same roof as Madame de Duras, but when their fortune was restored to them, they moved to a house in the Place Beauvau, opposite Madame de Tessé's. Madame de Montagu pursued her regular course, attending Mass under the guidance of Madame de Duras, in a dressmaker's attic; for even after the Concordat, the churches of Paris, unlike those in the country, were afraid to open. She had the unexpected joy of reunion with the two de Noailles boys, whom she found on her first arrival, but otherwise her life was stern. At first every sound of the city, especially the noise of the cart-wheels, made Pauline shudder, and she felt as if she herself were a ghost who knew little of the world around her. She once had occasion to visit the Temple prison, where a friend of hers was confined for coming to Paris without the proper passport. To reach him she had to walk through the rooms of the royal prisoners. Her emotion made her footsteps falter, and she began looking about in the cupboards, on the chance of finding some relic. It was not in vain; at the back of a forgotten shelf she found a coarse blue and white salad-bowl, and carried it away beneath her cloak as the symbol of her most sacred memories. But she would not dwell on the past. Courageous as ever, she even attended the soirées given in the Pavillon de Flore by the Consul Lebrun, because she wanted to rescue from his clutches the old Hôtel de Noailles, in which he was about to live.

She failed in her object; the house was not restored to the family till 1814; and the Duke, who had waited on, in hopes of regaining it, now returned to Switzerland and became a neighbour of Necker's. In his new home he found peace and leisure for study, and at Coppet, when he wanted it, the sublime hubbub of Madame de Staël's conversation. And thus, like the philosopher he was, he passed cheerfully out of history.

Lafayette, meanwhile, had gone to some baths, in the hope of restoring his health, but even here he could not escape popularity. "Is that Lafayette?" asked a peasant who saw him carried by in a litter, and the General replied that it was. "I congratulate you upon it," said the man, and the litter passed on, with much the same glory as the white horse had done of old. Soon after, the family went to Chavaniac to stay with their old aunt, who was still strong and alert, "and kept all her faculties alive in her loving heart." Here Madame de Montagu joined them, bringing with her a *preux chevalier*, young Louis de Lasteyrie, whom she intended for her niece, Virginie. The young people were obliging enough to fall in love with one another, and their engagement followed immediately. Madame de Tessé once more bought the trousseau; the rest of the relations presented them with a purse containing two thousand francs; and the marriage was celebrated by Père Carrichon, who had lived to give his blessing to life, as well as to death.

It was to Aulnay, the country house—only three leagues from Paris—which Madame de Tessé had purchased, that the bride and bridegroom went for their honeymoon. Here the veteran talker was enjoying not so much the twilight, as the lamplight of existence. She spent the mornings in bed, with a book in one hand and a pencil

in the other; rose at noon; and passed the rest of the day in conversation, inside a highly-coloured Kiosk which she had built in her garden—in memory, no doubt, of the eloquent Ottoman, so dear to the Voltairian generation. There was one marked difference in her, however; whether from spiritual conversion, or from the long habit due to the involuntary possession of a chaplain, she continued to attend Mass regularly—and she prided herself on never saying a word that could shake the faith of her great-nephews and nieces. She found compensation in becoming a centre for all of them, and in giving her opinion on every other subject upon earth.

Virginie and her husband soon returned to Lagrange, where they were going to live. Her parents were in money straits, and had been so for a twelvemonth. It is disagreeable to find dusty corners in the characters of acquaintances, still more in those of old friends. Gouverneur Morris had grown old, and the faults of a shrewd character are those which age makes most prominent. He clamoured politely for the satisfaction of the loan he had made to Adrienne, during her husband's confinement at Olmütz and, whereas it had been paid her in *assignats*, the value of which had since fallen, he would not face any loss, and demanded repayment in cash. It was with great difficulty and the strictest economy that Lafayette met his claim, and it was all the more cheering to him when America vindicated her good fame by presenting him with a large piece of land in Louisiana. Presently he was offered the governorship of that province, but he could neither part from his family, nor transplant it; and as he still believed that his country needed him, he gratefully refused the honour.

He and Adrienne absorbed themselves in good works

for the benefit of the estate. There was a private hospital —La Charité de Noailles—which they supported; their house was a Bureau for kindness, and their park open to the public. The peasants were allowed to cut wood upon their grounds. Adrienne once asked her husband if she might give a *quart* of wood to an infirm couple who lived too far off to fetch it. "No darling, you may not," he answered, "I had rather you gave them a hundredweight."

Soon after Virginie's marriage, Adrienne went to Paris, and, together with Madame de Montagu, embarked on a new task. Pauline had long been bent upon discovering the burial place of the guillotined, where her mother and sister lay, but her efforts to get a clue had been vain. At last she heard of a poor girl who was said to know, and, after some search, found her in an attic. She proved to be a half-starved lace-mender who, unseen, had followed the tumbril containing her father's and brother's bodies to the place where the cart unloaded. Next day, she guided Adrienne and Pauline to the spot. It was a desert region outside the Barrière du Trône, and belonged to a ruined Augustinian convent. The Cemetery of Picpus was its name and, as the two sisters looked upon it, they decided, with emotion, that the land—could they buy it—should be no private affair of their own, but should belong to all who had relations lying there. They could not get possession of the actual piece of ground where the victims were buried, because it had already been purchased by the Princess Hohenzollern, whose brother had been guillotined; but, with the help of some kindly priests, they raised a large sum from the aristocrats of their acquaintance, and bought the adjoining waste and the convent in its midst. As soon as the fund permitted, they restored

and enlarged the Chapel, and—copying from the list in the *Conciergerie*—they put up a marble tablet behind the altar, with the names of sixteen hundred human beings who had perished in the last six weeks of the Terror. Amongst these were more than a hundred under twenty-five years old—boys and girls of sixteen and one child of fourteen; not to speak of a hundred and forty-two men from sixty to seventy-nine, and ten from eighty to eighty-five. And, strange to say, by far the greater number were obscure people: labourers, artisans, tradesmen, even hawkers. It was not enough to commemorate them; the sisters gave the Church to the Nuns of the Perpetual Adoration of the Sacrament, so that prayer might never cease within its walls. Communion was daily administered at its altar, in memory of all who had died in the Revolution. And every year, at the end of April, or the beginning of May, a solemn service was held there, at the end of which all the families of the dead, in deep mourning, followed by the congregation and preceded by the clergy, marched in procession out of the Church, and wound in double file through the garden-alleys, chanting the *Miserere*, "until they reached a little walled-in enclosure, in the midst of which stood a hillock shaded by cypresses and poplars, and crowned by a wooden cross." Here they knelt down to pray—on the ground they had made into God's Acre. Later on, some missionaries settled there also, and the whole place became sacred to memory and to labour.

One sorrow more had come to fill the cup of the de Noailles to the brim. This was the death of the Vicomte de Noailles, in 1804, at San Domingo. He was brought there by some business undertaken by him in the course of the mercantile career that he had adopted; but

when he arrived, he found that the negroes had revolted and, allied to the English, were in possession of the French dominions. He put himself under the orders of Rochambeau, then commanding, and sought the thick of the danger. His excellent English accent helped him. Seeing a British vessel, he too hoisted British colours, chatted with the captain, who took him for a compatriot, and boldly sailed alongside the English ship. It had come out, said the Captain, to take the Vicomte de Noailles. "Why! I am out on the same mission," the Vicomte exclaimed. Presently, when night fell, he proposed to his men to board the enemy's vessel, and they did so victoriously. But at the end of the battle, a ball struck him down and killed him. His country had banished him; he gave her his life in return.

It was Adrienne's last sorrow. Her joys in these years had been many; her grandchildren were growing up round her and learning their lessons with her; her husband was working at her side; and, in 1807, her happiness was crowned by the return of her son and young de Lasteyrie from the Austrian campaign. But the terrible blood-poisoning which had prostrated her at Olmütz had never left her, and now it re-asserted its virulent strength. A few days after her son's arrival, her sufferings became acute, and on October the 11th, she went to Mass for the last time. A few days later, she was moved to Madame de Tessé's country-place at Aulnay, and thence, as the illness did not abate, to that lady's Hôtel in Paris. The sanguine Lafayette, who was staying at Chavaniac, was alarmed—for the first time—by an anxious note from Madame de Tessé, and hastened to town with George. The joy of seeing them caused an immediate improvement; the doctor was hopeful, and she herself said to Madame de Simiane:

"It is a malignant fever, but I am being well treated; I shall pull through."

Her pain became terrible, but her serenity was unchangeable. One day, when Lafayette was talking to her of her angelic gentleness, "It is true," she replied, "God made me gentle; but it is not like *your* gentleness—I have no such high pretension. You are as strong as you are gentle; you see things on such a big scale. But it is true that I am gentle, and you are very good to me." "It is you who are good and generous, above all other women," he answered—"Do you remember my first departure for America? how all the world was in arms against me, and you managed to hide your tears at M. de Ségur's wedding? You did not want to look unhappy, for fear I should be blamed for it." "You are right," said Adrienne, "it was pretty good for a child; but how nice of you to remember things that happened so long ago."

Another day, she said to Virginie and Emilie (her daughter-in-law): "My condition disturbs your joys, but none of mine are affected by it!" The thought of her children never left her; even in her delirium, though confused as to their whereabouts, she never made a mistake about their characters. One day, when she was still wandering, she called Anastasie to her bedside: "Have you any idea what maternal love is?" she asked impetuously—"Do you revel in it as I do? Is there anything sweeter, stronger, more intimate? Do you feel, as I do, the need to love and to be loved?"

She found matter for rejoicing everywhere, even in her sufferings. Her body was covered with open wounds. "What a fitting thing it is," she exclaimed, "that your wife should be the living representation of a martyr!" "But when she was pitied for her pain," wrote Lafayette,

"she became afraid of exaggerating it to herself and others. One day, when she was being bandaged, and I was looking at her with compassion, 'Ah,' she cried, 'I am more than rewarded by those loving glances.'" . . . "Often"—he resumes—"she begged me to stay because my presence calmed her; at other times, her discretion resumed its sway, and she wanted me to attend to my business. When I said that I had none excepting to tend her, 'How good you are!' she exclaimed, with her weak but penetrating voice—'you are much too kind; you spoil me; I don't deserve all that; I am too happy.'" She thought of every detail. "Is it not rather inconsiderate," she asked one day, "for so many of us to be staying here?" "Certainly not," responded her husband laughing, "there are only sixteen of us to feed!" "It is true," she added, "that my aunt has as much pleasure in doing us a kindness, as we have in receiving it from her."

All her being, indeed, seemed to be dissolved in love, and whether conscious or delirious, she was constantly expressing the two things which made the sum of her—her heart and her faith. And this, too, was love. "Her religion," wrote Lafayette, in his description of these last weeks, "was all tenderness and confidence; the fear of hell had never come near her. She did not believe in it for the good, the sincere, the noble, whatever their creed. 'I don't know what will happen at the moment of their death,' she said, 'but God will illumine them and save them.' The only Divine punishment she could understand was to be debarred from the sight of God. How often, indeed, have I teased her about her amiable heresies! . . . She had that merit, so rare in pious people towards those who do not share their opinions—she could believe entirely in their goodness and recognise it without reserve."

She, on her side, was always preoccupied about his heterodoxy, even when her mind was beclouded. "Her confessor," he continues, "came to see her. In the evening she said to me, 'If I go into another world, you will know that I shall be very busy about you. The sacrifice of my life would be nothing, whatever it cost me to part with you, if it assured your eternal happiness.' The day on which she took the Sacrament (which she did so that her daughters might not feel troubled at the last moment), she set great store on my being present. After this, she fell into a state of chronic wandering (lasting till her death). . . . Yet I never saw her mistaken about me, excepting once or twice for a moment, when she imagined that I was a fervent Christian. But this error was only transitory, and accompanied by doubts and questions which proved the nature of her wishes as strongly as that of her delusions. 'You are not a Christian?' she asked me one day—and when I did not answer, 'Ah, I know what you are, you are a Fayettist?' 'You credit me with a great deal of pride,' I answered, 'but are you not something of a Fayettist yourself?' 'Oh, yes!' she said, 'with all my soul! I feel that I would give my life for *that* sect. . . .'"

"But above all things," she added later, "one must be a Christian. You admire Jesus Christ; one day you will recognise His Divinity. Do you want to go with me to martyrdom?" "I would follow you anywhere," answered Lafayette—and content with his reply, she began to praise God for his salvation.

Madame de Tessé used to say that the Creed of this passionate sectarian was a curious compound of the Catechism and the Declaration of Rights, though she added she had never seen a fanatic so free from party-

spirit. Had she never married, her politics would have naturally made for freedom and justice; as it was, the passions of her mind were joined to her passion for her husband. Now, when her poor brain was overshadowed, that feeling, alone, seemed to give her a steady light.

"Her disordered imagination," Lafayette's account goes on, "was never invariably fixed, except in her relations with me. It seemed as if this impression was too deep to be affected; stronger than disease; stronger than death itself. For this angelic creature already no longer existed here; everything in her was frozen; and feeling, as well as vitality, had found their last refuge in the hand that pressed mine. Perhaps she abandoned herself more freely to the expression of her tenderness than if she had had all her reason. . . . She would have felt obliged to distract herself more severely from the sentiment which, as she said, gave life to every fibre of her body. . . . 'How fervently I ought to thank God,' she exclaimed during her illness, 'that my strongest passion has also been my duty!' And on the day of her death, 'How happy I have been!' she whispered—'What a destiny to have been your wife!' Then when I spoke to her of my love, 'True,' she answered, in the most touching voice, 'Yes, it is true. How kind you are! Say it once again; it gives me such pleasure to hear it. If you think I do not love you enough, you must blame God for it; He has not given me more faculty than that.' 'I love you,' she cried, 'I love you, Christianly, mundanely, passionately!'"

Once she told him of those early days following his first return from America, when his entrance into the room made her almost faint for joy, and she feared lest she should importune him by her affection. "So I tried to moderate myself," she concluded, "and you ought not to

be discontented with what remains of me." Another time, she was talking quite sensibly of her daughters' happy marriages. "But I have not been able to make them as happy as myself," she ended—"one would want the power of God to re-create such a miracle; you are incomparable." Towards the end, she made him promise to love her always, and they plighted their troth for eternity, as they had done for time. But even about this she had compunctions, and was afraid she had been selfish. "Dear heart," she said, "do not be troubled about me, if you want to marry again. Perfect happiness is in Paradise, but there are good moments on this earth."

"In spite of the confusion of her ideas," writes her husband, "she had a presentiment of death. On her last night but one, I heard her say to her nurse: 'Do not leave me; tell me when the moment for death comes.' I approached her, and she grew calm immediately; but when I spoke to her of returning to Lagrange, 'Oh no!' she exclaimed, 'I shall die. Have you anything against me?' 'Why should I, my darling?' I answered—'you have always been so good and tender!' 'So I have been a pleasant companion to you?' she asked. 'You have indeed!' 'Well, then, bless me!' All these last evenings, when I left her, or she thought I was doing so, she begged me to bless her."

Yet she wished to live, and kept all her hold on life, constantly asking him about his pursuits. She had been deeply interested in his farming, "and it remained clear in her head, because it was *my* daily interest," he tells us. He planned their journey to their country home. "Ah!" she exclaimed, "that would be too delicious"—and shortly after, "My God, my God!" she cried, "give me six poor weeks more of Lagrange." Sometimes she grew restless

and wanted to start with him at once, or begged him to go first and prepare the house ; but it was enough for him to ask her to rest. "Very well, wait a moment," she would say, "and I will fall asleep quite quietly." Even when she most disliked food or medicine, a word from him or her children, even the idea that her nurse might be blamed, always determined her to obey—and she never showed impatience at her pain, only gratitude for every service. She had her fits of excitement, but it was nearly always joyous: as when George entered the room and she held out her arms to him, imagining that he had just returned from the wars. Only once was she agitated about herself, when she found out that she was wandering, and imagined herself to be insane. "Am I mad?" she enquired. "I should be sorry to think so," replied Lafayette, smiling, "after all the nice things you have said of me." "What!" she cried ; "I am married to the sincerest of men, and cannot get at the truth. . . . I must resign myself to the ignominy of insanity." He answered that she deceived herself—that she was loved and respected. "I don't care about being respected, if I am loved," she rejoined. . . . "I am tedious and burdensome, but my children must make the best of having a mad mother, since their father is contented to have a mad wife." Her tender raillery was like a smile on the face of Death.

"And," writes Lafayette, "it was not only her imperturbable sweetness, her consideration for others and continual need of saying something gracious which illuminated the wanderings of her mind, even whilst she confused every idea which was not connected with the heart. . . . There was also an elevation in her thoughts, a subtlety in her definitions, a precision and elegance in her expressions,

which surprised all who came near her. . . . This chronic delirium which took possession of her was the strangest and most touching that I have ever seen. Her troubled brain was always in Egypt or Syria, in the midst of the events of the reign of Athaliah, which her grandchild Célestine's lessons had left in her imagination."

At one moment, she fancied herself with the De Tessés at Memphis. At another, she strayed into the Old Testament and begged her husband to tell her how her children stood with the family of Jacob, which she fondly invested with the warmest affection for Lafayette. Or it was the quarrels of Israel and Judah which absorbed her. "It would be funny," she said to him, "if *your* wife should be forced in the end to sacrifice herself for a king." Often she returned to the events of her own life. "She was seized with the fear of disturbances and proscriptions, and prepared herself for them with the gentleness and firmness which distinguished her at real crises. She kept congratulating herself on the noble courage and high-mindedness of her sons-in-law; then began enquiring whether there was going to be a persecution of the Christian martyrs, and counted on me to protect the oppressed. 'It seems to me,' she said, 'that the world is beginning over again; always, and always fresh experiences! *When* will it run on two wheels as you want it to?' One day she had a hazy notion that she was an empress. 'But if I were,' she added, 'you would be an emperor, and then it would be *you* who would have a guilty conscience!' . . . Sometimes she was heard to pray in her bed . . . and once she improvised a beautiful prayer which lasted an hour. She made her daughters read aloud to her the prayers of the Mass, and noticed whatever was left out for fear of fatiguing her. There was something heavenly about the

way in which, on one of her last nights, in a strong, emphatic voice, she twice repeated the Song of Tobit, the same that she had sung to her daughters when she first caught sight of the towers of Olmütz. I went to her. 'It is by Tobit,' she said, 'I sing badly now; that is why I recited it!' Her doctor said that never, in the whole course of his long practice, had he seen anything approaching her adorable character and her strange delirium. 'No,' he exclaimed, 'I have never seen anything which could give me an idea that human perfection could go so far!'

"Her ravings," continued her husband, "were remarkable also by their correspondence with the degree of her affection. For me she always had a steady judgment, which mingled strangely with the fantastic situations in which she imagined us, and she always saw me in the light of my principles, my feelings, my tastes, or my antipathies: for me, too, she showed an amazing sagacity—a constant and detailed preoccupation. In her hallucinations she would say to me: 'Decide! you are our chief; it is our happy fate to obey you.' And once, when I implored her to calm herself, she turned to me and gaily quoted:

"'À vos sages conseils, seigneur, je m'abandonne.'"

"I do not say all this to boast," adds Lafayette. . . . "Only because I like to recall how tender she was, and how happy. Dear God, how radiant she would have been this winter! The three households united—the war ended for George and Louis—Virginie with a child of her own!"

All her dear ones were near her now. Children and grandchildren surrounded her; Madame de Tessé, who was ill all the last weeks of her niece's life, was carried to her bedside; Madame de Montagu never left it. She enquired after everybody, and sent them fond messages.

"Give *mille tendresses* to Madame de Simiane," she once said to her husband, in allusion to his great friend. She continually asked both him and Pauline for news of her mother, and thought she had seen her in the morning. "We shivered," he writes, "when we heard her say calmly, on the day of her death, 'To-day I shall see my mother.' . . . Later on in the day, instead of renewing her enquiries, as was her wont, she only said to Madame de Montagu, 'I look upon you as *her* successor.' When her confessor came one morning, he could see that I respected what I believed to be my wife's last wishes. I easily persuaded him that his seeing her would be superfluous and might do harm. But on the eve of her death, as my daughters attached great value to the repetition of certain Prayers and Observances in her room, the Vicar of the parish came and stood behind the curtain which screened her and me, and performed these last offices, without her knowledge."

This same night, she took a ring in the shape of a crucifix from her finger and put it on that of her sister, Pauline de Montagu. "The peace of God be with you, dear Pauline," she said, as if to show that the Cross could alone bring the peace.

"The next day," continues Lafayette, "was an anniversary very dear to our hearts—the day when, twenty-eight years before, she had given me George. It seemed, this time, as if she were intoxicated with bliss. This day of rejoicing between her and me was that of her death."

It was Christmas Eve, in the year 1807; they lost her, as they said afterwards, at the foot of Christ's manger. Her last day was, perhaps, her most wonderful.

"It appears to me," exclaims her husband, "that I am dwelling upon these details in order to put off the shock of

that final moment when we saw that the doctor was giving up every effort to cure her, and only trying to prolong her life—when we knew too well she would have no to-morrow. Till then, we had only come to her by twos and threes; but all day she had exhausted herself in sending for us, and there was no longer any reason against the presence of the whole family. They sat round her bed in a semi-circle, and she could see everybody. 'What a charming party!' she said, looking at them with infinite content. She called all her daughters to her in turn, and said the sweetest things to them. She gave each of them her blessing. I am sure that this last morning was rapture to her heart. . . . She kept repeating that she thanked God for the mercies He had lavished, and was still lavishing, upon her. She certainly had some idea that death was approaching her; for after she had said to me, as she often did, 'Have you been pleased with me? Are you really so good as to love me? Then do bless me!' And after I had answered, 'You love me too, and *you* will bless *me*,' she gave me her benediction, for the first and last time, with the most moving tenderness. Then her children went up to her, one after the other, and kissed her hand and face. She looked at them with inexpressible affection.

"She had an even stronger consciousness of the end when, evidently fearing some convulsion, she made a sign to me to go away. When I remained, she took my hand, and, with a glance of loving gratitude, put it over her eyes, as an indication of the last duty she desired of me. All through these hours, we felt a gentle agony in our hearts, which were torn between the wish to show her the love that delighted her and the conviction that emotion would use up her flickering vitality. So I was repressing my

words as carefully as my sobs when the touching expression in her eyes, and some half-articulated words of hers, suddenly forced me to express the feelings with which my heart was stifled. Her voice revived, and she cried out, 'Then it is true—you *have* loved me! Ah, how happy I am! Kiss me!' Those poor arms, which had been almost motionless, came out from beneath her coverlet with a force that amazed the nurse. She put one of them round my neck and, drawing my head down to hers, she pressed me to her heart and repeated, 'What joy, . . . How lucky I am to belong to you!' . . .

"Rather later, towards the end of her agony, and whilst she could still speak, my daughters feared that her habit of putting away religious observances in my presence, might hamper her wish to hear prayers or to offer them. A little crucifix happened to lie near her hand. Instead of taking it, she took hold of my hand, which she clasped between hers in an attitude of prayer, and probably it was for me she was praying. They asked me to go away, so that Madame de Montagu, who had had her confidence from the first upon such matters, could find out if she had anything to tell her. My first impulse was to resist this request, tender and timid though it was. I feared lest her last moments should be disturbed; and as a husband, I confess that my faithful heart experienced its first pang of jealousy. I felt a passionate need to occupy her exclusively. I wanted all her looks, all her thoughts. But I repressed myself so that she might have no desire unfulfilled, and I made way for her sister, who repeated her question twice. The beloved patient, who generally delighted in Madame de Montagu's presence, twice replied, 'No,' and added, 'go to supper.' She appeared impatient to see me back in my place. Directly I returned, she

again took my hand in hers and said, 'I am all your own.' Those words were the last she uttered.

"People say that she was always preaching at me. That was not her way. In her delirium, she often expressed the thought that she would go to heaven, and—dare I write it?—even this idea did not console her for leaving me. Several times she exclaimed, 'This life is short; let us meet in God and abide together for eternity.' . . . 'I wish you the peace of God,' she murmured to me and her children a little before the end; and just before her last words to me, she told us that she did not suffer. 'No wonder,' said the nurse, 'for she is already an angel.'

"As long as her right hand could move, she put mine in turn on her lips and her heart. My left hand never left hers; I felt its motion; and when she drew her last breath, it seemed to be once more expressing those last words of hers—'I am all your own.' . . . We stood round the bed which we had put well forward in the room, and she signed to her sister to sit down on it. Her three daughters never ceased laying hot cloths on her hands and arms, to preserve some vestige of heat in them. We all fell on our knees round the bed and followed the slow movements of her breathing. It was without any appearance of suffering, with the smile of kindness on her face, and clinging closely to my hand, that this angel of tenderness and goodness ceased to live. I fulfilled the duty which she had assigned to me. . . .

". . . On Monday she was borne with great simplicity, as she had desired, to a place close by the ditch where her grandmother, mother, and sister lie hidden amongst sixteen hundred victims."

It was to M. de Maubourg, his old comrade at Olmütz,

and the trusted friend of his wife, that he wrote the long diary of her sufferings, "out of the abyss of grief in which he was plunged." He ends it with a noble summary of all that she was. "My sorrow," he says, "likes to pour itself out to him who was ever the dear confidant of my thoughts, in the midst of all the troubles which often made me think myself unhappy. But till now, you have found me stronger than circumstances; to-day, a circumstance is stronger than I am. I shall never rise again. During the thirty-four years of a union, in which the love and the elevation, the delicacy and the generosity of her soul, charmed, adorned and honoured my days, I was so much accustomed to all that she was to me that I did not distinguish her from my own existence. Her heart wedded all that interested me. I thought that I loved her, needed her; but it is only in losing her that I can at last clearly see the wreck of me that remains for the rest of my life—a life which was to have been given up to many distractions, but for which neither joy nor care is any longer possible. . . . For there only remain memories of the woman to whom I owed the happiness of every moment, undimmed by any cloud. Although I may say that she was passionately attached to me, I never saw the slightest tinge of exactingness, displeasure, or jealousy in her; never anything which did not leave me perfectly free as to my enterprises, my affections, even my absences. . . . And her passion for me and for our doctrines never for a moment lessened her pity or her indulgence for people of other parties, nor was she ever embittered by the violent hatreds of which I was the object. . . .

"You know as well as I all that she was, all that she did, during the Revolution. It is not so much for coming

to Olmütz that I wish to praise her here; it is for refusing to come without first assuring my aunt's comfort, and settling with our creditors; it is for having had the courage to send George to America. What a noble imprudence she showed in remaining the only woman in France who, compromised by her name, never wished to change it! . . . She was ready to speak in the same way before the Tribunal, and yet we all know that this woman, so high-souled in great circumstances, was as simple and easy as a child in daily intercourse. She would have been too easy and too kind, indeed, had not her virtue made of all this a law of life entirely apart. So also was it with her piety. I can truthfully say that, in all these thirty-four years, I never felt a moment's constraint; that her religious exercises were unaffectedly subjugated to my convenience; that I had the satisfaction of seeing my most unbelieving friends as often welcomed, as much loved, esteemed, and appreciated, as if there had been no difference of opinion. She never said anything more than that, when she thought matters over, she always hoped, that, with my innate sincerity, I should end by being convinced. All the messages she left behind for me are written in the same sense, and entreat me to read, for the love of her, certain books which I shall now examine afresh, with true reverence. And I shall name her religion 'Sovereign Liberty,' so as to endear it the more to myself; it will remind me of her when she used to quote with such pleasure the words of the Abbé Fauchet: 'Jesus Christ, my only Master.' . . .

"But though I am given up to a deep and enduring sorrow; though I have dedicated my being to one thought alone, and to a worship beyond this world; though I have a greater need than ever before to believe that every-

thing does not die when we do, I am still susceptible to the sweetness of friendship—and what a friendship, my dear Maubourg, is yours!"

So ends his account of the woman who was to him "a model of love's eloquence."

She lived on in other hearts, besides those of her nearest. Years after, the Comte de Ségur, the friend of Lafayette's youth, refreshed himself with the memory of her sweet brave spirit. "Faithful to all her duties," he wrote, "she found in them her only pleasures. . . . Pious, modest, charitable, severe to herself, indulgent to others, she counts among the very few whose pure names gain a fresh glory from the tragedy of the Revolution. Ruined by its storms, she hardly seemed to remember that she had once enjoyed a great fortune. She was the happiness of her family, the staff of the poor, the consolation of her country, and the honour of her sex."

Lafayette's grief for her was no fickle emotion which passed with the expression of it. The waters ran deep. Till the end of his life, he wore her portrait round his neck. On the gold medallion that contained it were engraved her words to him: "So I have been a pleasant companion to you? Well then, bless me!" And every morning, before leaving his bedroom, he spent a quarter of an hour in looking at her face, in kissing it, in meditating deeply. "On the rare occasions," says his daughter, "when something prevented him from doing this, he was perturbed for the rest of the day." Adrienne's room at Lagrange was always kept as she left it, and the anniversary of her death he spent there alone—with her.

Conclusion

CHAPTER XII

Conclusion

THE soul had departed from the household of the Lafayettes; as a whole, it existed no longer. Paris saw little of Lafayette after his wife's death. He retired to Lagrange, where he lived with all his children and their families, intent on his crops and sheep, and only watching Napoleon's doings from afar. But he was still talked of at Court—a Court now largely composed of the old *Noblesse*, who had ended by yielding to the Emperor and flocking round him. Had he not a providential—or was it a fairy-tale—power of dispensing crowns or dukedoms to those whom he favoured? When General Bernadotte received the throne of Sweden, he came to see his old friend, Lafayette, before starting for Christiania, and warned him of the danger of his single-handed opposition to Bonaparte. The risk, so he said, lay not so much in the tyrant's own mood as in that of the aristocrats, who were always trying to fan his irritation against Lafayette. His fury broke out one day in the Council, when it was again proposed to have a National Guard. "Gentlemen," he perorated, "my speech is not aimed at you. I know your devotion to the power of the throne. Every one in France has been corrected of his errors. I was thinking of the only man in my Empire who is not—Lafayette! You see him quiet at this moment. Well, I assure you, he is ready to begin again."

It was no longer generosity which withheld the Imperial hand from his adversary, only the fear of the masses, who still made the General their hero. For seven years, however, from 1807–14, he remained safe in his seclusion; the Spanish and Russian campaigns did not draw him forth; nor did the Emperor's seizure of the Pope—who blocked the royal road—and the Pontiff's imprisonment, in 1809, at Savona and at Fontainebleau, force any utterance from Lagrange. But if the uncle had learned to hold his tongue, his nephew had not, and young Alexis de Noailles, a true son of his parents, was thrown into prison for disseminating the Papal Bull against Napoleon. He was offered release, if he would serve in Bonaparte's army, but refused. His younger brother, Alfred, who had different opinions, and fought with distinction under the Imperial standard, obtained his freedom. Alexis sought refuge in England, and only came back to France with the Bourbons, in 1814; Alfred left his country for Russia, but was struck dead, at the age of twenty-six, by a cannon-ball, in the heroic charge of the Berezina—a fresh shock to the heart of his adopted mother, Madame de Montagu, who mourned him as if he were her son.

The de Tessés did not long survive him. Mademoiselle de Montagu had just married M. de Mérode, and the honeymoon had again been spent at Aulnay. Soon after, in January, 1814, M. de Tessé was seized with paralysis, and died in his Hôtel at Paris. Some people—those who form a constant background to existence—live more in their death than in their life. "A habit of fifty-eight years," said his widow, "is not one which I can get rid of." Though she kept both her reason and her firm will, she sank into a state of languor from which she could not rally. The tottering Empire and the invading armies, all

the events which a month earlier would have filled her with excitement, were now powerless to move her. "I have a great deal of business to settle; I must be quick. My dear niece, I feel the heel of death already upon me," she exclaimed to Madame de Montagu, to whom she was dictating her will. When her niece left her, Lafayette and his family came to nurse her; but soon after their arrival, and only a week after her husband's death, she followed him to the grave. She had begged to have a priest at the first signal of danger, but there was not even time to fetch one. And so her soul passed out into the unseen—if not in the odour of sanctity, at least in an odour as acceptable to God—that of a tender heart, whose charity was never impaired by her mind: a mind which Madame de Staël describes as "the greatest she had ever known."

It seemed quite in character that the public spirit of Madame de Tessé should vanish with an empire; that her light should set together with the star of Napoleon. The news which he had received of the Allies' movements, whilst he was still in Russia, had made him leave the ruins of his army and hasten back to France. His hour had struck. The enemy was marching on the capital, and he met them on the banks of the Marne. They succeeded in laying siege to Paris, and his brilliant manœuvres could only stave off disgrace, not prevent it. In March, 1814, Marmont and Mortier signed the Deed of Capitulation, and on the 31st, Blücher and his army entered the city. A few days later, Napoleon signed his abdication at Fontainebleau, at the same table on which, not long before, the prisoner Pope, Pius VII., had "leaned his trembling hand"; and thence, early in April, he departed for his unkingly prison at Elba.

Such were the scenes enacted at a stone's throw from

the Rue d'Anjou, where Lafayette had been watching by Madame de Tessé's death-bed. On the day that the Allies entered Paris, he shut himself up in his room and wept in solitude. It must have seemed like a dream—this turbulent Paris which he had once commanded—where he now had to lie inactive. His grief for his country was heightened by personal anxiety. His son and young de Lasteyrie were serving in the National Guard, and his other son-in-law, Maubourg, an officer of the Imperial army, was taken prisoner by the Powers, though, by the grace of the Prussian King, he soon obtained his release. Lafayette hastened to call upon that sovereign and thank him for what he had done. He saw the Czar also, on two occasions, at Madame de Staël's. The first time they talked of the abolition of slavery; the second, the Czar withdrew with him into the embrasure of a window and broke out into lamentations over France and its lack of vigour. He was led into a discussion of the Bourbons, and deplored their obstinate adherence to the old *régime.* Lafayette replied that their experience should have corrected them. "They are uncorrected and incorrigible!" the Czar exclaimed—"The Duke of Orléans is the only one of them worth anything: the only one who has any notion of Liberalism."

It was natural that Louis XVIII. should have no liking for the Frenchman who, of all others, had consistently opposed his restoration—who, in much remoter days, when Louis was but Duke of Provence, had refused to be his Secretary, and had wounded his royal sensibilities by offensive Republican talk.

A king does not forget such things, and his feelings became evident in the year's interval before Napoleon's return. At first, there was some show of reconciliation;

Louis sent messages and compliments; Lafayette appeared at Court. "I had scruples," he wrote, "about recalling the Bourbons, and yet the strength of first impressions is such, that I felt pleasure in beholding them again, and the sight of the Comte d'Artois in the streets moved me strangely; I forgave their sins, even those against their country, and wished with all my heart that Liberty could be wedded to the reign of Louis XVI.'s brothers and daughter . . . After several fruitless efforts to keep our cockade, I resigned myself to pure white, and presented myself in uniform at the first Royal Audience. I was very well received by the King and by his brother." But there was a sense of strain in all this goodwill, and both King and subject soon relapsed into more natural attitudes towards each other.

It was very different with the rest of his family. Alexis de Noailles came back in the suite of the Comte d'Artois, was made Royal Commissioner at Lyons, and, later, an Emissary to the Congress at Vienna, together with Talleyrand, who entrusted him with all the negotiations about Italy. The old Duc de Noailles, meanwhile, returned to his Hôtel at Paris, and lived there with the Lasteyries and the Montagus. Throughout the Emperor's reign, Madame de Montagu had lived between her estate at Fontenay (the bequest of her mother) and her town house in the Place Beauvau, where she opened a little Royalist *salon*, one quarter political, and three quarters ecclesiastical. Her life in the country was entirely one of charity, and she was the close friend of all the villagers. She made a school for their children in a part of her Château, which the peasants named "*l'Hôtel de la Providence*"; she gave them her lawn for their weekly balls, and she and her family danced with them. "*C'est la plus honnête femme que je n'ai jamais*

vue—elle est pire qu'une mère," the village postilion said of her.

When the Allies were marching on the capital, their troops invested Fontenay, and it was no longer safe for the Montagus to stay there. They came to Paris, bringing with them the recalcitrant village conscripts who sought shelter under their wing ; and they converted their small house into a temporary refuge, which contained, as by a miracle, the cart-loads of fugitive peasants who, in terror of fire and sword, soon arrived there from Fontenay.

When the Bourbons returned, Madame de Montagu hastened with her niece, Euphémie de Noailles (then Madame de Vérac) to pay her respects to the Comte d'Artois. They were received with effusion. "You will find my daughter-in-law (Madame d'Angoulême, Louis XVI.'s daughter) perfectly simple, and devoid of any luxury," he remarked to them in the course of conversation. A few days later, they saw her at the King's reception, clad in a plain brown dress and a blue gauze scarf, the picture of pensive graciousness, though not beautiful like Marie Antoinette. Louis XVIII. recognised Euphémie at once, by her likeness to her mother ; Madame de Montagu he knew of old. "I am acquainted with all you have done, Madame," he said to her—"You are charity personified."

The Royalists' rejoicings were of short duration. In March, 1815, came the news of Napoleon's escape from Elba, the triumphal progress of "the little Corporal" through France, and the rallying of his troops around him ; of his entry into Paris, and his reign of a hundred days. Lafayette, together with Benjamin Constant, Lally Tollendal, De Broglie, and Chateaubriand, formed part of a Committee to prevent his return to power, but their

efforts were in vain. Men who but yesterday had been Monarchists, had to-day sold their souls to the magician—a magician who no longer trusted only to his spells, but set about practical measures for the conciliation of the Liberals. He reformed the Government, and submitted his neck to a political bridle, in the shape of a National Representation and an organized Constitution. Lafayette, though he still distrusted him, recognised an opportunity for his own principles, and became a member of the Chamber. Like a ghost of the Revolution, he also appeared in the *Champ de Mai* (that watery reflection of the *Champ de Mars*), where, in 1815, was proclaimed, amidst high festival, the *Acte additionel aux Constitutions de l'Empire*—a measure apparently reinstating the sovereignty of the people. Republican spirits could not but feel encouraged at this; still more when, soon after, the Chamber set to work to produce a second edition of the Constitution of 1791. But these hopes were even more short-lived than those of the preceding Government. The Allies, furious at their enemies' success, left their disputes over the spoils of 1814, and united to oust him at Waterloo. Almost crushed by his defeat, he again returned to Paris, speedily summoned a Council of his Ministers, and, Lucifer-like to the end, proposed to reassemble the army for a last attempt. They listened in silence, till St. Jean d'Angély rose and suggested the Emperor's second abdication. Lafayette had, meanwhile, become the head of a Committee to force on such a decision, and when Napoleon looked round, his old friends had vanished: only Lucien Bonaparte remained, faithful and fiery, pleading for him in the Chamber. Joseph, whom Napoleon had once pointed out as the friend who would alone remain true to him, had long since deserted his fortunes. The tyrant at last saw

that the game was up, and finally abdicated at the Tuileries, whence he proceeded to Malmaison.

Paris could breathe again, and formed a provisional Government of five, with Fouché at its head. Lafayette had been busy republishing his *Declaration of Rights* of '89—a document not calculated to find favour with officials. In spite of this, he was surprised—almost offended—at being excluded from the Five, and was only half appeased by being sent as representative to the Allies. He was to make peace with them, but only on condition that they would not support the return of the Bourbons. They demanded the Emperor's person; the French Government, however, had pledged its faith to Bonaparte that it would not give him up, and Lafayette firmly refused the enemy's request, with the natural result that no terms were arrived at. But when he returned to Paris, a shock awaited him. He found that Fouché had made a shameful capitulation, accepted Louis XVIII., and given up Napoleon, who was sent to St. Helena.

Lafayette was disgusted with politics, and longed to retire to the country; but he was still a member of the Chamber, and had to return for his parliamentary duties. He watched in silence the doings he had prophesied as the outcome of the Bourbons' accession. All the follies of the old order were revived, popular rights were curtailed, taxation increased, and the clergy resumed their sway. The General made no protest except by his inaction, but the Court was not deceived as to his opinions, and its liking for him did not grow warmer. He was stung into movement at last, in 1820, by the passing of the thoroughly unconstitutional law which restricted the electoral ballot to the number of 12,000—an aristocratic measure which enraged him. He sprang to arms and became the heart of

every conspiracy against the King. One plot evolved by him had its centre at Vincennes, and was ruined by an untimely explosion. Another, in the following year (1821), spread its network all over France, and aimed at putting him at the head of Government. It was also spoiled by a blunder, and the Royalists tried hard to collect evidence against him. There was not enough to convict him, but by dint of stratagem and obstruction he was gradually forced to give up his place in the Chamber and to retire for good to Lagrange.

Here he lived serenely, amidst his good works, with his children and his twelve grandchildren about him. They formed a kind of early Christian community, with him for their pastor—not an ecclesiastical pastor, perhaps, though —since his wife's death—he attended Mass regularly. But the Gospel guided their actions, and their peasants blessed them. When the cholera broke out in the village, and its inhabitants fled, they stayed behind to nurse the victims, and brought back the fugitives by force of their example. Every Monday, two hundred pounds of bread of the same quality as their own was distributed amongst the poor, and in times of dearth the supply increased to six hundred pounds, with the addition of soup and a *sou* for each person. In the famine of 1817, they opened a soup-kitchen, in which they all helped. It was pointed out to Lafayette that if this generosity continued, in six weeks the provisions of the district would be exhausted, and he and his family would themselves be without food. "All right," he said, "*we* can live in Auvergne, and these peasants will at any rate be kept alive till harvest-time" —and he was as good as his word.

It is pleasant to find mirth and hospitality flourishing, as well as charity. The large tribe of cousins made one

family, and were constantly interchanging visits. Lafayette himself was the youngest of the young and the soul of all their doings. His laugh, says some one who knew him then, was very low, but frank and gay; his skin smooth and fresh as a boy's. He extended his circle beyond his family, and, indeed, Lagrange became a centre for every shade of democrat. No American came to France without going there, and the English were not slow to follow—Mrs. Opie amongst them, who describes her visit to the veteran with evangelical effusion.

The greatest contrast to this mixed assembly was the strictly Royalist society at Fontenay, the home of the Montagus, between which and Lagrange there was continual intercourse. "Have you read my brother-in-law, Lafayette's speech in the Chamber, and his praise of the Revolution?" wrote Pauline to a friend, in 1821—"I am indignant with him; but nobody knows it, and I continue to see him as usual; for in family relations, he is always perfect and of good counsel. Still, his blindness and his moral frenzy for Liberty are a cross to me."

The poor little lady had by no means done with crosses. She had but a few years' happiness, greatly increased by the arrival of her father, who lost his second wife in 1824, and came to live with his "*chère Montagu*," as he called her. "Of all my faculties," he said to her, "I shall soon have only one left, my love and admiration for you." He lingered on till 1828, when he died, with her at his side. But before that, in 1825, when she was slowly recovering from what had seemed to be a mortal illness, she was overwhelmed by the sudden death of her only son, just twenty-eight years old, who fired his gun by accident, whilst out shooting, and killed himself on the spot. For the moment, even *her* soul was crushed. "Lord, cease to

strike me!" she prayed, "for I am about to sink beneath the weight of my cross." She revived, but only to give her days to others: her own life was over.

In 1823, Lafayette yielded to pressing invitations and went over to America, where he renewed his youth and saw his age crowned. Greetings met him at every step, from friends old and new. Here he saw Joseph Bonaparte and Achille Murat, son of the King of Naples. Better still, Jefferson and John Adams were yet alive to welcome him, and Colonel Nicholas Fish, his old comrade-at-arms. Together they re-visited Yorktown. Lafayette seemed lost in meditation, as was natural in the place which had witnessed the climax of his military achievement. "Nick, old fellow," he said at last, "do you remember our sledding here with the Sedburgh girls?" *Sic transit gloria mundi!* and thus happiness outlives it! After revisiting Mount Vernon and its memory-haunted garden, after countless ovations almost royal in their splendour, he returned to his country, to be hailed in song by Béranger and met by fresh ovations from all good Republicans. Ary Scheffer also commemorated him in a life-size portrait. Madame de Montagu was much harassed by the thought that he would probably have been painted with the Declaration of Rights in his hand, but she was too delicate to ask him. On his first visit to Fontenay after his return home, she enquired what pose he had chosen. Her curiosity made him smile. "Well, my dear sister," he replied, "I am taking a walk—my hat and cane in my hand—like this," and he imitated the attitude he had described. "And the other hand?" asked Madame de Montagu anxiously. "It is in my pocket," answered the General, "which is much better than having it in somebody else's."

He had left Louis XVIII. on the throne, and came back to find Charles X. in his place. Charles had an odd kind of affection for Lafayette, with whom he remembered having riding-lessons at Versailles, when both of them were boys. They had also sat together amongst the Notables. But Lafayette did not break his country retirement, and Charles proved as blind as Louis. He violated liberty whenever he could, and constantly disobeyed the *Chartre* —drawn up in the last reign to force the Bourbons into constitutional limits. Not content with this, he twice dissolved Parliament, because the Opposition was too strong for his taste; and on the second occasion, in the summer of 1830, he commanded a new Parliament to meet on August the 3rd, in the hopes of increasing his power. The Polignac Ministry, appointed by him the year before and already terribly unpopular, chose this moment to pass four unconstitutional measures, signed by both Sovereign and Ministers, and destructive to the liberty of the Press and the rights of Representatives. They were published in "*Le Moniteur*" of Monday, July the 26th, without any further precaution—apparently with no further foreboding. The King and Dauphin went out hunting as usual, but in Paris, fury prevailed. The Journalists were the first to organize themselves; Government securities fell with alarming rapidity; the money-panic spread; barricades were raised; and the tumult became universal. General Marmont took fright and hastened to warn the King, who was still indifferent and gay. "Shares have gone down," said Marmont. "Oh, they will go up again!" replied the Dauphin. His forbears' experience had not been of much use to him. Charles, still refusing to be perturbed, consented to send some soldiers under Marmont to Paris; but when he got there, on Tuesday, the 27th, he found his

troops insufficient. He divided them, however, as well as he could, into three sections, and met his maddened adversaries on July the 28th, with a bloody repulse as the result.

In the meantime, Lafayette, summoned by his son, had made all haste to Paris. Soon after his arrival, he was entreated to accept the commandership of the National Guard—or Forces, as they were now called. He showed no hesitation: "I will not refuse," he exclaimed, "I will behave at seventy-three, as I did at thirty-two." History repeats itself in different tones of voice, and its note this time was a thin one, when compared to that of '89. The crowd bore him on its shoulders to the Hôtel de Ville. "Let me alone!" he cried—"I know my way about the Hôtel de Ville better than you do." This was Thursday, July the 29th, and late in the same day, Marmont and his troops returned to St. Cloud. The King was at last frightened, and despatched Commissioners to Paris the same evening, but Lafayette refused to see them. He was once more leading a Revolution. On Friday, the 30th, Charles X. tried to mend his fortunes by revoking the four Ordinances, but it was too late. All that day, the *Députés* had been discussing the future Government of France, and the answer to the Bourbon's concession was a message, telling him that the Ordinances had been already repealed and that he was no longer King. That night Louis Philippe, Duke of Orléans, returned to Paris; and on Saturday morning, he received the offer of the Lieutenant-Governorship of his country, on condition that he submitted to proper constitutional limitations. On his acceptance, the deputies conducted him to the Hôtel de Ville, but the surrounding crowd showed much more disaffection than enthusiasm. Again Lafayette came to the rescue, and climbing on to the roof of the Hôtel de Ville, proposed the new rules to

the mob. The dramatic apparition of their hero changed their mood; dislike changed to clamorous welcome, and Louis Philippe received his office from the hand of the People.

Charles X., meanwhile, fled with his family to the Grand Trianon and, later on, to Cherbourg and England. The French Captain of the vessel which took him there talked to him about Lafayette. "He started well," said Charles—"for a long time he wished to be the King of the Masses, but he will never be anything. He is at once ambitious and a fool. . . . He has turned out badly." "Your Majesty knew him when you were very young, Sire?" asked the Captain. "Certainly," was the answer—"we used to have our gymnastic exercises together; he was clumsy and awkward, but he was gracious and amiable, and amused us all. Never could we have dreamed that he would have turned out so badly." It was the verdict of a deposed monarch; but kings, with or without their crowns, were bound to dislike Lafayette.

He straightway went to Louis Philippe, and proposed to him in detail the "Programme of the Hôtel de Ville," which was based on the American Constitution, but urged "a Popular Monarchy, surrounded by Republican institutions." The throne he kept as a tradition needful for France. Louis Philippe was all graciousness, and on August the 3rd, when the Chamber met, he came out thence as King. Once more the young heart of the veteran Lafayette beat high; once more Canaan was in sight; once more, also, the inevitable riot occurred, caused by some slight changes in the Constitution; and once more, when he had quelled it, it seemed to him no more than a deplorable accident on a smooth road. The disturbance, however, made it expedient to continue the

National Guard, and the General remodelled it with all his old prestige. A monster banquet was given in his honour, and, wherever he turned, he was feasted and petted—the Phœnix of Revolution. Only the new King, stung by increasing jealousy of his influence, remained cold towards him, and was anxious to discard his support. But the trial of Charles X.'s hated Ministers produced a new wave of feeling against the Bourbons, and the throne was no very secure place. Lafayette alone could protect it and put down the rising bitterness, and Louis Philippe found it impossible, for the moment, to do without him. So the Sovereign bided his time, and when affairs were calmer again, there were subtle Court plottings against the overruling subject. At last his enemies succeeded in abolishing the commandership of the National Guard, a post which, for some time, Lafayette had been anxious to resign. He gladly seized his opportunity for retirement to Lagrange, where great-grandchildren now awaited him; and though he remained a member of the Chamber, the evening of his days was spent in peace and in leisure.

Only once, was there any attempt to disturb him—when Belgium offered him its crown. "It would become me as well as a ring becomes a cat," he answered, with a laugh, and with a decisive consistency rare in Republicans.

For the rest, he led a happy patriarchal existence, still scheming for mankind, and surrounded by all he loved. The son of M. de Mun had settled down in the neighbourhood, where he carried on the traditions of Madame de Tessé and made his Château a centre for youth: the Lafayette and Montagu youth, in particular. Here they talked and laughed, and acted "Proverbs," with Lafayette for audience, and made the house their home almost as much as Fontenay, where Madame de Montagu continued

to live in faith, hope, and charity. The charity, indeed, became almost alarming, especially when the Montagus made their winter move to Paris, to their new Hôtel in the Rue Hilbertin, where they had to hide away their mother's clothes and linen, lest she should give all to the poor who thronged her doors. She had even cut off her beautiful hair, because a barber had told her it would fetch eighty francs—an irresistible addition to her funds. But she had not much time left, and her long life was drawing to a close. In 1834, her husband died; and in 1837, she lost Alexis de Noailles, the one surviving son of the "*Céleste Vicomtesse*," then in the prime of his career. Two years later, on her favourite Saint's day, that of St. François de Sales, she herself passed away at seventy-three, amidst children and grandchildren, as Madame Lafayette had done. The evening before her death, like Adrienne again, she slipped off her finger the crucifix ring which her dying sister had set there, and put it on the hand of her daughter, a symbol of the faith which was the heritage she left to her children.

Lafayette had preceded her. He died calmly, without much suffering, on May the 22nd, 1834, and was buried in the Picpus, by the side of his wife. His loss was a general one, for the public had always kept him in sight, and the leader of a recent Revolution could hardly be looked upon as aged. The New World mourned him as well as the Old—the men of the dying generation, and the young spirits rising on the horizon.

Never, perhaps, was man so appreciated in his lifetime. The letter which Madame de Staël wrote to him in late days, from her usual vantage-ground, the Capitol, only expressed in hyperbole the conviction of every Liberal Frenchman. "As long as you live," it ran, "I have hopes

for the human race. I address this sentiment to you from the summit of the Capitol, and the benedictions of the Shades are borne to you by my voice."

Indeed, the fame which he enjoyed was almost impossible to live up to, and the men of a later time, who could investigate its sources in cold blood, were bound to be disappointed with the result.

In judging a personality, and in trying to sum it up before our own minds, there are always two things to consider—what he was, and what he did. What Lafayette was, seems almost perfect. As a husband, a father, a friend, he played his part nobly; and though he was not a passionate man, he was a faithful and tender one. Even the tinge of coldness, which contrasted so strongly with his intellectual enthusiasm, had a charm of its own, and came of a big nature, too high to notice the lowly trifles which make life warm and comfortable. He was constant in kindness and generosity, and his singleness of heart is almost unique in history. Though he insisted upon Liberty, he never wooed her by force, and was always, mentally and politically, a Liberal, not a libertine. To the world outside his circle, especially the young world, he became a beacon-light which death could not put out.

Carlyle says it is partly his creed that history is poetry, could we tell it right. "There must be some oxygen yet, and Lafayette is only just dead!" cries Emerson; and his saying is but the due acknowledgment from the men who came after Lafayette and entered the Promised Land. Whether consciously or not, they owed much to the Moses who never reached it, but lay alone upon Pisgah. He would have died happier, had he foreseen that the modern French Republic was so soon to embody the forms of government he championed.

But when we come to what he did, our task is a more baffling one, and fills us with perplexity. It seems almost incredible that the hero who, in his own day, was looked upon as both the High Priest and the Deliverer of his country, should have achieved so little that was effectual, either in tactics or in policy. It was perhaps impossible to check the on-rush of that ball of fire which we call the French Revolution, but, in any case, Lafayette was not the individual to accomplish it. He had not the personal magnetism so essential to a leader of men: the inexplicable genius of personality which has given power to people of such varying ability—to a Mirabeau, a Gladstone, a Napoleon, a Parnell. Lafayette had the density which belongs to all minds nourished on a fixed idea, and it limited his knowledge of his fellows and deprived him of ability to feel the pulse of affairs. The gay and childlike vanity which made him so lovable a being—which gave him pleasure in himself and the wish to please others—was another hindrance to his career. It blinded him to his errors, and prevented him from having a strong or lucid policy. The view which he took from his mountain-top was, indeed, so wide and distant, that it often became indistinct and wanting in detail.

Had Lafayette possessed the gift of insight which makes men know when to yield the less vital part of their ideals, he would have gone nearer his goal. He did not possess it. He was as much in love with abstractions as any intellectual undergraduate at a Debating Society, and demanded the Absolute on all sides. But the Absolute is the monopoly of the Immortals, and when mortals lay claim to the gods' possessions, they have, from the days of Prometheus, been punished with failure. Like Condorcet, Lafayette could not have turned into a successful

politician. Politics are a practical science, and, to a large degree, they must consist in the crystallization of expediency. Lafayette, the theorist, rejected expediency as immoral, and it is therefore unfortunate that he should have assumed the rôle of a statesman, and forced us to judge him as such. The judgment is bound to bring regret. Had Lafayette waived minor points and attempted to unite with the Girondins, he might have made his philosophic Liberals into a weightier party—or, at least, into a finer and more forcible failure. As it was, he defeated his own ends by allowing the Moderates to split up into impotent groups; and the Revolution of 1789 belied its golden promise and ended in smoke.

When all is said, we return to the fact that it was an individual that Lafayette was best fitted to be; and it is as a generous individual that we like to think of him. No life so high-souled could be devoid of some religious inspiration. For the greater part of his existence, he found it outside creed, and made a religion of Liberty. After his wife's death, he changed his views and made Liberty religious. All the latter part of his life he was a practical, if not an orthodox Christian, and it was from the Gospels that he drew spiritual sustenance. "*Encore de l'Evangile!*" he was wont to exclaim in his old age, when he found himself flagging in good works. In many ways his ideas resembled those of Lamennais, whose career he watched with interest, and whose "*Paroles d'un Croyant*" he read with admiration. "It is the apocalypse of 1789," he said, "and it will make a scandal amongst the *Croyants*; he goes beyond *me*, though, in Liberalism." But like all big beliefs, that of Lafayette is hard to define. We can only use his own words. "Independence of thought," he says, "and the august feeling of pure Deism, raise them-

selves high above dogma. It is none the less true that no power in the world can put itself between the heart of man and Divinity. The first duty of all who recognise a separate revelation from that of conscience, is to follow in peace the faith that it presents to them. The lie of the soul is to conform to a cult which they consider sacrilege." Lafayette's words summed up his nature, and we may well accept them as his last farewell to us.

When we revisit a deserted house, once full of beloved faces and familiar figures, that are now only to be found in the dim corridors of memory, we are overpowered by an almost wanton sense of mortality. The same feeling seizes us when we part from the people we have never seen, but have learned to know more closely than we could have done, had the screen of the body stood between them and us. For the love we give to these unseen friends is a selfless love, demanding no return—a delicious intimacy and tranquil possession, unbroken from without or within. Day after day, like faithful comrades, we live at their side, till the dead are more alive to us than the living. But however great our longing, we cannot keep them with us, even by the power of the imagination. They have to pass away again, and leave us behind them sorrowing. And yet, is this death that we are watching? Are they not ours in enduring companionship, and in the same breath that we say "They have been," may we not also say, "They are"—"They will be"? For a large life is a life everlasting, and the immortality of the noble begins upon the earth.

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